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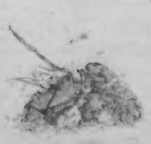

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

WINDOW TO THE SOUL:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF EYE CONTACT

BY

NANNA ANGUS

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND

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FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1988

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Date: February 18, 1988

Seeing. We might say that the
whole of life lies in that verb -
if not ultimately, at least essentially ...
To see or to perish is the very condition
laid upon everything that makes up the universe.

Teilhard de Chardin

The animus is in the heavenly heart ...
by day it lives in the eyes.

Carl Jung

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Window to the Soul: A Phenomenological Investigation of Eye Contact" submitted by Nanna Maria Angus in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Counselling Psychology.

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Date: February 18, 1988.

ABSTRACT

The importance of direct visual contact to human experience was noted several centuries ago by Leonardo da Vinci when he wrote: "The eye is the window to the soul." This investigation, inspired by an existential-phenomenological world-view, used a descriptive-reflective method to explore the nature of eye contact, or mutual gaze. Giving and receiving eye contact is an essential part of our communication with others, yet its essence and deeper structures has remained elusive to researchers. Extant research has been almost completely confined to the experimental designs of natural science. The phenomenon has important implications for the way we encounter one another. There is perhaps no aspect of human being that gives us such direct access to the world of inner experience. This seemed a topic ripe for a phenomenological approach.

The present study explored eye contact using a empirical - reflective methodology. Five participants were asked to describe in a written diary form their in situ experiences with eye contact over a period of several days. The written protocols provided the data sources for mapping the phenomenological structures of

the eye contact experiences under investigation. Protocols were analyzed according to the methods outlined by Giorgi (1975) and Colaizzi (1978).

Data analysis revealed a number of essential themes. Mutual gaze was experienced as: information-seeking; primary amongst the senses; highly intentional; powerful in validating or invalidating the existence of another; an effective "courier of affection;" having quite clearly prescribed rules; related to an individual's sense of self-esteem; and, above all, containing an element of ineffability and potent mystical power.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This investigation was prompted by a conversation with a fellow graduate student that occurred two years ago. My friend had apparently asked a professor what she felt was a particularly clever and insightful question. His response to the question was enthusiastic, but he directed his gaze towards an attractive female student sitting on the other side of the classroom, rather than toward the questioner. My friend described how she felt "cheated, depressed - somehow invalidated," and expressed surprise at the intensity of her own response to the experience. As I listened, her comments sparked a sympathetic interest, as I too could recall instances where I had experienced similar feelings.

This encounter precipitated reflection on my part as to the nature of the phenomenon commonly referred to as "eye contact" or "mutual gaze," and the subtle ways we experience it in our encounters with others. Since childhood, I had noticed something mysterious in the power of the eyes to transmit silent yet distinct messages - particularly the ability of gaze to transmit

positive emotions such as love, acceptance, and affection, or negative ones such as disapproval, disgust, or even hatred. I became interested in discovering what others might feel about this unique and silent world of communication.

Eye contact, or mutual gaze seemed to be an appropriate aspect of lived-experience for a phenomenological investigation. A survey of natural science research on mutual gaze, though voluminous, convinced me that natural science methodology had not succeeded in explicating the essence or deeper meaning of the phenomenon. The primordial experience of what it really means for human beings to look at each other remained elusive.

Simmel (1921) described eye contact as "a wholly unique union between two people, representing the most perfect reciprocity in the entire field of human relationship" (p.39). It is this aspect of mutual gaze that the present study seeks to explore and illuminate. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the nature of mutual gaze in a manner which has not previously been reported in the research literature. The present study may be the first that attempts to systematically analyze the structure of eye contact outside the laboratory setting. I intend to research the phenomenon where it

normally and naturally occurs - in the day-to-day lived-experience of individual people.

This study is inspired by my interest in phenomenology and philosophy, a commitment to seeking alternative methods for conducting psychological research, and an interest in potential practical implications and/or applications of the findings to the fields of teaching and clinical psychology.

Overview of Thesis

Chapter Two will be devoted to a broad review of existing literature on the topic of eye contact. The phenomenon of eye contact has drawn the attention of natural science experimenters, philosophers, anthropologists, psychologists, poets, and writers. I will review the contributions each of these fields has made to our current understanding of the phenomenon.

Chapter Three addresses the issue of methodological choice, and focuses on contrasting the natural science and the human science approaches to research. Particular emphasis will be given to an examination of the philosophical presuppositions inherent in the two paradigms.

Chapter Four describes the particular phenomenological method chosen for this investigation.

Chapter Five presents the results of the phenomenological analysis of the descriptive protocols of the five participants who consented to act as co-researchers in the study. Chapter Six presents a summary and discussion of the results described in Chapter Five, touches on potential practical implications of the findings, and suggests possible areas for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Synoptic Overview

The role of vision in human experience has been a subject of continuous fascination for centuries. Because the topic is complex, the literature review will be organized as follows: first, a review of the philosophical perspectives on visual perception and gaze, from ancient to modern thinkers will be outlined. This seemed a necessary and natural starting point. The survey then moves to a discussion of gaze and eye contact in mythology and anthropology - commonly referred to as belief in "the evil eye" phenomenon. Next, an overview of the role of gaze in literature and poetry will be presented. Then the eyes' extraordinary physiology will be briefly examined, followed by a synopsis of the contribution of research in the natural science domain. Finally, existing phenomenological perspectives on mutual gaze will be reviewed and the aims of the present research will be reiterated.

Philosophical Perspectives on Perception and Seeing

"Look into a person's pupils; he cannot hide himself" (Confucius: 551-478 B.C.).

In ancient Greek philosophy, there were two rival schools of thought concerning the means by which the eye is able to perceive. The principle antagonists were, not surprisingly, Plato and Aristotle. Plato opted for an "efflux" theory of vision (Blumberg, 1961, p. 81). This theory represents the eyes as not merely passive or mechanical receivers of visual sense perceptions, but as possessing their own internal illumination in the form of fire. For Plato, the eyes are transmitters of light, which, when they strike another object, either carry the image back to the eyes, or actually join the eyes to the image or object being viewed. In the Platonic view therefore, the eyes play a dynamic, highly intentional role in the experience of vision, and are capable of projecting their own light or energy into the world.

Amongst the five senses, Plato attributed pre-eminence to sight. This is because he believed sight to be intimately related to the soul, in an analogical and metaphorical way, and the eyes to be the principal sensory means by which knowledge of the 'external' world is acquired (Plato: Theactetus,

184A-189B).

A rival theory of vision, proposed by Aristotle in "De sensu," challenged Plato's ideas on logical and empirical grounds (Donaldson-Evans, 1980). True to the empiricist position, Aristotle denied that the eyes projected their own light and preferred rather to describe them as one of several "simple" bodily sense receptors, thus depriving them of the purposive and dynamic quality implicitly vested in vision by the Platonic theory.

During the Italian renaissance, Leone Ebreo (1650-1690) attempted to reconcile the Platonic and Aristotelian theories by asserting that there was a third and complementary force or action in seeing. He wrote: "In this third action consists the true essence of vision, and my purpose is to prove that the eye not only sees but first illumines what it sees" (Ebreo, 1937, p. 215). We shall see that Ebreo's "third force" theory places him as a forerunner among the later phenomenological philosophers regarding visual perception.

The ideas presented in the writings of John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume appear to be compatible with the Aristotelian empiricist position regarding the nature of vision (Angeles, 1981). The empiricist school

of philosophy maintains that all ideas are abstractions formed by combining and compounding what is experienced (observed, immediately given) in sensation. Our simple sensory experiences are the a priori building blocks for all knowledge, with the exception of some definitional truths of logic and mathematics. (Angeles, 1981, p.75). If everything that we know is ultimately dependent on sense data, then, of the five senses, the pre-eminence of visual perception for these philosophers seems incontrovertible.

In contrast to the empiricist school of philosophy, such phenomenological philosophers as Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Buber seem to hold views which are more closely aligned with the Platonic, or the idealist view of vision. The major distinction is that these philosophers acknowledge an element of intentionality in the act of seeing and view the "co-constitutional" nature of gaze as an inseparable unity that exists between the observer and the observed. Buber (1937) referred to "the streaming human glance in the total reality of its power to enter into a relation" (p. 97). This means that under optimal conditions of interpersonal encounter, the gaze of the other may be experienced as a "streaming" into one's entire being - that one is filled out and irradiated by a particular

form of energy that represents a unique phenomenal component of the gaze. This view appears to be quite similar to Plato's idea of the eyes possessing their own unique form of energy, or "fire". Husserl (1913) wrote about the "double intentio," or two-fold directedness of vision which he called "the directed mental glance...a glancing ray of the pure Ego, its turning towards and away ... which belongs to the essence of the cogito" (p. 67).

Merleau-Ponty emphasized the importance of the idea of the co-constitutionality of the observer and what s/he observes. He spoke of people being "stripped of existence" or of being "transformed into an object" by being looked at by someone who does not strike up any relationship but, as Merleau-Ponty (1962) described it, observed them as if they were "merely insects" (p.182). Sartre (1943) too reflected upon the co-constitutional nature of seeing and of shared interocular intimacy: "If someone looks at me, I am conscious of being an object. But this consciousness can be produced only in and through the existence of the Other" (p. 363).

At present, it appears that the philosophical theories about the phenomenon of visual perception in general and of eye contact in particular are equivocal. On the one hand, it seems reasonable to adopt the

empiricist position which asserts that our eyes are no more than passive mechanical receptors vital for an existence that requires us to be able to make some sense out of the thousands of visual impressions with which we are bombarded daily. Natural science research would undoutedly support this view, albeit conceding that these "optical instruments" are indeed remarkable in their complexity and physiological sophistication.

On the other hand, one could pursue the Kantian argument which would place the act of seeing somewhere between the Platonic and Aristotelian points of view - a view which acknowledges the role of the intentionality of the perceiver as an integral part of the process. Kant argued that rational thought processes per se cannot give us real knowledge of the external world, nor can sensation per se give us knowledge. Rather it is the dynamic interconnected unity of the two that make experience possible and intelligible. (Critique of Pure Reason. trans. N.M.Smith). The data in this study may help validate one or another of the competing philosophical assumptions implicit in various attempts at understanding the phenomenon of mutual gaze or eye contact.

Seeing in Mythology: The Evil Eye Phenomenon

The "evil eye" phenomenon, the belief that someone can project harm by looking at another's property or person, is found in many parts of the world. In examining this rather pervasive belief, reverberations of the ancient Platonic efflux theory of vision come to mind. Roberts (1976), in a cross-cultural study of 186 past and present societies, found evidence for evil eye beliefs in 67 cultures. Versions of the evil eye are embedded in legends, folklore, mythology, and superstitions dating from antiquity to the present (Tompkins, 1963).

In ancient Egypt, the eyes assumed three functions in religious belief: the seat of the soul (window to the soul), the creation of good, and the creation of evil (Distasi, 1981). Staring eyes peer blindly from neolithic Chinese and Bronze Age funerary pottery, presumably to protect the dead from tampering people and imagined evil spirits. The Greek kylix drinking cup often depicts two painted staring eyes that may act as a protective device. The legend of Medusa refers to her ability to turn men to stone with a single glance (Distasi, 1981). These are examples of differing scenarios around the simple belief that one's eye-power

can cause sudden harm to another individual or their property merely by looking at or being envious of that person. Maloney (1976) pointed out that despite the enormous bulk of evil eye scholarship, there have been few attempts to explain the existence of evil eye beliefs in terms of an integrated theory.

The most conventional explanation for the existence of the evil eye belief is that it is primarily concerned with envy, specifically that someone else's envy of one's own good fortune may bring about misfortune (Distasi, 1981; Maloney, 1976; Shoek, 1955). Freud (1959) himself, writing about the evil eye phenomenon considered its origin to be fear of envy, coupled with the defense mechanism of projection. He stated, "Whoever possesses something precious yet frail, fears the envy of others. He projects onto them the envy he would feel in their place. Such sentiments are betrayed by glances, even if we suppress their verbal expression" (p. 393).

Tourney and Plazak (1954) also follow this psychoanalytic approach by emphasizing the eye as an organ of aggression. They suggest that:

> With the utilization of the projective mechanism, fear of the evil eye may represent the manifestation of one's own aggressive impulses

> attributed as being apart from the ego and acting in turn against it. A need for punishment because of guilt over hostility and aggression can be realized in the suffering of a recipient from the influence of the evil eye (p. 491).

Through projection, therefore, the would-be aggressor is spared feelings of guilt because "I hate you" or "I envy you" has been transformed into "You hate me" or "You envy me". Hence, the active becomes the passive, the aggressor becomes the victim.

Garrison and Arensberg (1976, p.30) concluded that belief in the evil eye was the result of a cultural elaboration of ideas based on the combination of the Platonic efflux view of vision, widespread belief in witchcraft, and the "normal" discomfort experienced by individuals in mutual gaze. Natural science researchers, puzzled by the pervasiveness of the belief, have been inclined to view it as a quaint and somewhat naive expression of folklore, stemming from a lack of hard scientific evidence to extinguish the belief (Exline, 1970; Garrison & Arensberg, 1976; Gifford, 1958; Meerloo, 1971; Roberts, 1976; Spooner, 1970).

The common thread found in the writings of Freud and the Bible and the myth of Medusa is that everywhere are

encountered taboos, symbolic or otherwise, that bear the same message: there are things that are not to be seen with the naked human eye. These taboos strongly suggest that to see what is not to be seen is to risk blindness, or at the very least, to invite misfortune. Call it soul, psyche, ego or consciousness, the eyes have always had a powerful tendency to be associated with the animating spirit or "soul". Evil eye myths aside, the range of ills that can strike the eyes is astounding. They run from simple myopia to hysterical blindness to jabbing out one's own eyes, as in the myth of Oedipus. Having committed the ultimate transgression, Oedipus blames his eyes, tears them out, and wanders blind forever after. The obdurate existence of the evil eye belief therefore, is a testimony to our ancient and enduring fascination with the mysterious component sensed in the power of gaze.

The Gaze in Literature: Love's Fatal Glance

The representation of the eyes as love's principal agent has been a well-established tradition in amatory literature since ancient times. Usually it is the beloved's beauty which engenders love through the medium

of the eyes. Indeed, this aspect of falling in love appears to be so widespread and so constant in all literature that examples are boundless. However, when love is portrayed as something sudden, irresistible, and excruciating at the lover's first encounter with the beloved; when love is born not simply as a result of seeing the beloved, but by the active participation of the beloved's own glance, it becomes a topos which has been called the "aggressive eye topos" (Donaldson-Evans, 1980, p.20). The term "aggressive eye topos" refers to the suddenness with which love strikes and the tyranny that it exercises over its victim. Plato, describing the interchange which takes place between lovers through the medium of the eyes, spoke of how the beauty of the beloved enters the soul of the beholder like a stream or flood, and that love was in fact a kind of illness which can be transmitted by the effluences of the eyes. (The Phaedrus. R.Hackforth, trans., 1952).

Several recurring "aggressive eye" images appear in amatory literature from ancient to modern. Donaldson-Evans (1980) described how this extraordinary process takes place:

> The eyes shoot arrows, daggers or swords, project fiery beams which burn the soul and kindle love's flame; the eyes are directly associated with Cupid

> and often the instrument by which he casts his shafts; the eyes are trappers, ensnaring the unsuspecting glances of others; the glance of love casts a spell, a 'fascinato' over its victim (p.21).

Ancient Greek literature is replete with examples of the aggressive eye topos. In Achilles Tatius' work (R. Smith trans., 1855), we find numerous examples of the eyes' extraordinary powers. One of the characters of the above romance discusses how love has overcome him:

> No sooner did I see her than my fate was sealed - for beauty inflicts a wound sharper than any arrow, finding a passage to the soul through the eyes ... the eyes receive bodily impressions, as in a looking glass, and the reflection of beauty glancing into the soul begets union even in separation. The eye is a wondrous vehicle of love and constant intercourse...(p.321)

Thus the representation of the eyes as love's principal agent was a well-established tradition in Greek literature and was often combined with pseudo-scientific and psychological commentary on the ways the eyes were able to exert their influence over another (Donaldson-Evans, 1980).

The same theme is found in Arabic literature, where the eyes' role in endgendering love is referred to

constantly (Cline, 1971). In European Renaissance literature, the role of the eyes in love became a serious preoccupation of neo-Platonic thinkers and writers, as the nature of love itself became central to their philosophising. Most Renaissance literature on love portrays the eyes as having a double role. In the lover they become a kind of Achilles' heel, the traitors which allow admittance to the enemy, and are the cause of the soul's defeat at the hands of love. In the beloved, the eyes are seen again as aggressors, violating the lover's eyes, darting arrows or swords, or shafts which transmit love's influence to the other. The eye beams are also seen as agents of infection, in that their penetration into the lover's body is likened to a venom which poisons the heart and soul of the lover (Donaldson-Evans, 1980).

Curiously, the Platonic efflux theory of vision as described previously seems to recur constantly in amatory literature and song throughout the ages. Examples abound everywhere. To some extent, the aggressive eye topos can be seen not only as a literary theme, but also as one imbued with the mysterious and archetypal nature we associate with mythology. Several recent studies show that, in fact, the aggressive eye topos has a curious "relevance" to modern preoccupations

with the topic of mutual attraction and eye contact (Argyle and Dean, 1965; Exline, 1963; Exline and Winters, 1966; Kendon, 1967; Kleinke, Bustos, Meeker, and Staneski, 1973).

Many people have ideas about eyes. Numerous adjectives have been ascribed to the eyes to try to capture linguistically the essence of what a glance can convey. Words like soft, beady, tiny, saucer-like, hateful, menacing, crafty, loving, sparkling, dull, innocent, cold, fiery, icy, and a host of others attest to the power of the eyes to indicate mood or character. In medieval poetry, for example, we find mention of such phrases as " his eyes grew large with love", or "her eyes were cruel daggers of hate". Hess (1975), a pupillometrist, underscored this revealing and expressive aspect of eyes:

> What I particularly want to stress is that the eye is intimately connected to all parts of the brain, and, as a result, we have the anomalous situation of having a piece of the brain sticking out of the human body for all the world to see and to evaluate (p.5).

In other words, visual perception involves much more than just "seeing". A multitude of messages can be sent through the glance of the eyes.

Eye imagery then, in poetry, literature, and song has for centuries been a recurrent preoccupation for analysis and reflection. Direct eye contact between strangers may even, on occasion, be described as "love at first sight," signifying that a single glance from an unfamiliar person can produce an enormous emotional impact. While a one-way glance signifies one person's interest in another, a mutual glance can signify the inception of a relationship or what has been called "shared interocular intimacy" (Tomkins, 1963, p.157), "participation in a wordless exchange" (Exline, 1963,p.3), or "consciousness of consciousness" (Sartre, 1943, p.363). That romantic love can be obsessional and visually based is illustrated in Al Dubin's 1937 song "I Only Have Eyes For You":

My love must be a kind of blind love,
I can't see anyone but you.
And dear, I wonder if you find love
An optical illusion too?
Are the stars out tonight?
I can't tell if it's cloudy or bright-
'cause I only have eyes for you...

Biological and Cultural Basis of Gaze: The Impact of Direct Vision

Biological

The human eye may be the most amazing phenomenon of the entire body. The old maxim, "I'll believe it when I see it" can be readily appreciated in reviewing the impressive neuroanatomical substrates of human vision. Of the three million or so sensory fibres entering the primate brain, about two thirds arise from the eyes, and of the thirteen cranial nerves, six are involved with ocular performance (Freese, 1977). The complexity and capacity of the human visual cortex is reflected in its enormous size: about 20 square feet by 1/10 inch, if flattened out (Newell, 1978). The extraocular muscles, which have the highest innervation of any muscles of the body, may contract as many as 100,000 times a day.

The eyes serve a crucial scanning function. Visual sense impressions are subjected to a variety of secondary perceptual processes by which the more salient stimuli are differentiated from less important ones (Grumet, 1983). The fovea, or point of central vision, is constantly directed to scrutinize the most significant features of the visual field. Excitation of cells within this tiny fovea, one and one-half

millimeters in diameter, is thought to cause neurons within a region 10,000 times the original area to respond (Kaufman, 1974). Freese (1977) pointed out that if discrepant sensory impressions are received, the influence of sight is pre-eminent: " Visual perception is capable of overriding all other information should any of it conflict with the visual sense" (p. 72).

Gaze or eye contact in the animal kingdom appears to carry with it important implications for survival and mating behaviour. During his voyage to the Galapagos Islands, Charles Darwin (1872) became aware of the vital importance of eye contact in the animal world and wrote extensively on the topic. Grumet (1983) pointed out that it is reasonable to assume that:

> ... evolutionary selection pressures developed brains which stored generalized representations of salient environmental stimuli, such as visual interest of other parties, colouring it with rich emotional significance. The critical importance of eye contact for many animals is quite literally emblazoned on the bodies of butterflies, birds, snakes, fish, and peacocks, whose eye-shaped markings are thought to mimic the eyes of predators and hence induce the avoidance response (p.173).

It seems likely that in most animals, including humans, a common effect of staring eyes is physiological arousal (Argyle & Cook, 1976). In monkeys with permanently implanted electrodes, a maximum alerting response is elicited when their gaze meets that of the experimenter (Wada, 1961). In human subjects, EEG recordings reveal signs of increased arousal when eye contact is established (Gate, Lucas, Nissim, and Harpham, 1972), and direct eye-to-eye engagement has been shown to generate significantly higher excitation in G.S.R. than does unreciprocated gaze (Nichols and Champness, 1971).

It is interesting to note that only in primates and man does eye contact also function as an affiliative signal. In all other species gaze is primarily a signal for aggression (Argyle & Cook, 1976). These researchers point out that a possible explanation for the differences between animals and man may lie in the different visual experiences of an infant during the earliest encounters with feeding or other aspects of child care (Argyle & Cook, 1976,p.16) and cite numerous studies that seem to support their thesis: (Klaus, 1971; Kessen, Haith, and Salapatek, 1970; Fantz, 1961; Gough, 1962; Wolff, 1963; Vine, 1973). The implications of these experiments have been well summarized by Schaffer

(1971) who concluded that mutual gaze between infant and mother possesses "certain primitive stimulus properties" (p.58) that are an integral part of the early bonding process. The same argument is presented by Pearce (1985). It seems possible, therefore, that there could be an innate template in humans that provides us with the capacity to recognize distinct eye contact patterns associated with the earliest experiences of mutual gaze.

DiStasi (1981) proposed what he felt was a more current idea of vision, one that once again returns us to the classic debate on the nature of vision as first argued by Plato and Aristotle. DiStasi prefers to support the Platonic view, rejecting the idea that the eyes act as passive recording receptors only, and cites discoveries in modern physics to support his view:

> Far from merely recording, eye and brain are now thought to impose their own version of order upon reality...The human eye, in short, <u>creates</u> the world of objects according to some still-mysterious template. This idea leads to some classic philosophical conflicts between appearance and reality, between the world our eyes create and the one that truly exists... (p.69).

Ronchi (1977) suggested that the images we think we see are better characterized as "effigies", or "psychic

representations" constructed by the mind as a result of the interaction between outside wave patterns which he calls the "ethereal image" of the object, and wave patterns emanating from the mind itself (p.p.97-100). From this viewpoint, one could conclude that vision is an almost depressingly solipsistic phenomenon - that we are what we see, or, mirror-like, we see what we are. Ronchi's perspective on vision suggests that through sight, what we are able to see is, at most, a "projected reality", with the viewer and the viewed locked into a mutually inclusive reciprocal relationship that cannot be separated for independent analysis.

The "new" quantum physics, as described by Zukav (1979), seems to complement and affirm Ronchi's point of view. The new physics tells us "that an observer cannot observe without altering what he sees. Observer and observed are interrelated in a real and fundamental sense ... In short, what we experience is not external reality, but our <u>interaction</u> with it. This is a fundamental assumption of 'complementarity'" (p.115). This point of view not only appears to reflect the philosophical positions of Kant, Husserl, and Merleau-Ponty regarding perception as outlined earlier, but is also clearly in harmony with the notion of co-constitutionality, the focal concept of the

phenomenological approach to human science research which will be described in Chapter 3.

Cultural Aspects of Gaze

It should be briefly stated that the phenomenon of eye contact appears to be in part culture bound. In many societies there are explicit rules about the use of gaze which are taught to children. Often these rules prescribe gaze aversion. The Navaho Indians, and some African and Asian societies (particularly the Japanese), regard eye contact as disrespectful and threatening, whereas Greek and Arab societies indulge in sustained eye contact when communicating as evidence of sincerity and interest (Argyle & Cook, 1976). In this respect, therefore, the results of this investigation cannot be said to be universal in the broader sense of the word.

Experimental Research: The Eye in the Laboratory

Categorizing the experimental research on the subject of gaze or eye contact presents a formidable task. Almost no experimental research was completed in the field until the early 1960's, when an extraordinary number of natural science-type studies were begun, and for the next fifteen years or so, the topic of eye contact or mutual gaze appears to have sparked intense interest for a large number of researchers. Throughout

the 1960's and 1970's, several hundred experimental studies were completed.

Argyle and Cook (1976), have exhaustively classified more than four hundred studies on the topic of mutual gaze. They report that the first research on gaze in social behaviour was an observational study by Neilsen (1962) at Harvard University. At about the same time, Exline (1963, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1970, 1971) and associates started a long series of studies, using standard experimental designs, with amount of gaze, or mutual gaze as the dependent variable, and later as the independent variable. At the same time, Kendon (1967, 1969, 1973) started his ethological studies of the sequence of glances in conversations and of the linkage of verbal and bodily signals to gaze.

Generally speaking, the percentage of time an individual gazes, and the percentage of time that mutual gaze (MG) occurs, have been the most widely used measures in this research. Many different measures of eye contact have been taken, such as total gaze, frequency and length of glances, individual and mutual gaze, and gazing while listening or while talking. Many of these variables are highly correlated (Argyle & Cook,1976). Kendon and Cook (1969) found that total gaze correlated with length of look, and negatively with

frequency of gaze; gaze and mutual gaze correlated, as did looking while listening and talking. For many research purposes, amount of gaze, or amount of mutual gaze are the only measures considered necessary, and have in fact been the only measures taken in most studies (Argyle & Cook,1976,p.38).

Kleck and Nuessle (1968) categorized most of the experimental research on eye contact as following either an indicative or a communicative approach to the phenomenon. They point out that the communicative significance of the cue has been largely ignored by the majority of the studies. Simply stated, the indicative approach studies the empirical determinants of eye contact. For example, how many seconds in a dyadic encounter can eye contact be sustained before it is broken, whereas the communicative approach seeks to define the psychological processes which produce eye contact, or the functions it serves. For example, <u>why</u> is it that females have been found to engage in more mutual looking than males? (Exline & Winters, 1966). The results of their experiments confirmed the hypothesized congruence between certain indicative functions of mutual gaze and its communicative value for observers. That is, eye contact not only indicated how

attracted a person is to another or how tense s/he is while interacting with that person, but it is also taken by observers to be a cue which can be used as an index of attraction and/or tension (Exline & Winters, 1966, p.245).

Recent experimental studies are few in number and appear to continue to fall into either one or the other two categories. Most are replications of earlier studies. Examples of recent indicative studies are those by McAdams, Jackson and Kirshnit (1984), and Wagner, Clarke and Ellgring (1983). Hamlet, Axelrod and Kuerschner (1984), and Rall, Greenspan and Neidrich (1984) have published more recent research investigating the communicative fuctions of eye contact.

In summary, although there exists a plenitude of experimental work done in the area of gaze and eye contact, the existing studies appear to do no more than confirm what average casual observers with any degree of interest or awareness could readily observe for themselves in their day-to-day behaviour and interactions with others. There seemed to be something missing. The phenomenon, as stated earlier, seemed to be much more than merely the sum of this body of scientific research, but rather a subject ripe for the phenomenological approach. It is this approach that we

will now consider.

Phenomenological Research on Eye Contact

To my knowledge, there exists no phenomenological research on mutual gaze that adopts the procedures used in this investigation. There are, however, a small number of descriptive and theoretical articles that have looked at the structure of eye contact from a phenomenological point of view (Alapack, 1986; Heron, 1979; McConville, 1979).

Alapack (1986) referred to the significant role mutual gaze plays in the early stages of romantic attraction: "Each takes the risk: to pursue the promise and to court the danger which were adumbrated in the initial concert of their eyes ... It surprised him that he inuitively understood her gaze" (p.51). Sensing her desirability "by the light in his eyes," (p.53), she relates how "everything looks different through his eyes ... becoming a part of him allows me the opportunity of borrowing his sight to perceive the world differently" (p.53). In citing these brief fragments of experience, Alapack invited his readers to reflect on their own lived-experience of the phenomenon. One particular moment of one individual's experience becomes in this sense an expression of the universal essence of the

phenomenon.

Heron (1979) approached the subject from a more theoretical point of view. He distinguished carefully between the terms "eye contact" (seeing the eyes of the other as purely physical objects) and "mutual gaze" (where the perceiver is attending to the quality or meaning of the gaze; that is, the mediating aspect of the eyes as conveyors of distinct messages). Heron desribed the gaze as "a unique and irreducible phenomenal category" (p.250) that cannot be subdivided for research purposes into smaller constructs as is frequently the case in experimental research.

According to Heron, gaze is best described as a "transphysical luminosity" - neither purely mental nor purely physical, but having some properties of both. Gaze has its sensory location in external physical phenomena, yet it is co-constituted with the most intimate aspects of consciousness itself, and is essential to the active disclosure of our consciousness to others. His use of the term "luminosity" refers to the idea that the gaze has a certain projective energy that is capable of revealing our inner selves to others and vice versa. Again, Heron makes references to the "streaming" quality of the gaze, as referred to by Buber earlier in this chapter. This mutual streaming

constitutes a unitive field of consciousness between two persons where "each is revealed to himself, each is revealed to the other, and and each reveals himself to the other" (p.256). Furthermore, the kind of perception involved in grasping the meaning of a look is intrinsically "a priori" and immediate. According to Heron, the gaze represents a kind of extralinguistic aspect of vision that is most often not noticed, since it is usually hidden behind the screen of language.

McConville (1979) is another writer who approached gaze from a phenomenological point of view. He asserted that at a foundational level, perception is essentially pre-reflective and pre-cognitive. He made the point that "vision is not simply related to behaviour, but is itself behavioral ... it moves through and takes hold of the world in a manner expressive of the practical intentions of the subject" (p.112). McConville's point is that gaze is intentional. The observer takes hold of what he/she sees in an active, purposeful fashion. "The gaze is alive ... it is gentle; it moves slowly, unobtrusively, and rolls over the contours ... gaze can touch, and take in much more than 'the eye can see'" (p.113).

Perhaps the reader can sense, from these few quotations from phenomenological writers, why the

present writer feels they have succeeded more completely in capturing the deeper structures of the phenomenon of gaze. Their carefully reflective and richly descriptive analyses of the phenomenon seem to offer a much needed and comlementary approach to the vast numbers of studies already completed in natural science research on eye contact and mutual gaze.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGICAL CHOICE: NATURAL SCIENCE OR HUMAN SCIENCE?

Introduction

The present writer was faced with the choice of an appropriate method which would address the essence of the question posed. In choosing a method by which to study a question relating to a particular phenomenon, the primary concern of the researcher should be careful reflection on the nature of the question s/he seeks to explore. Keen's (1974) statement: "We are all native phenomenologists" (p.3) implied that whether we adopt a natural science or a human science approach, we all experience our worlds individually, we reflect on our individual experiences, and we try to gain understanding of these unique experiences.

This chapter begins with contrasting the philosophical assumptions inherent in natural science and human science research in psychology. Considerations involved in adopting phenomenology as the methodological choice for this thesis will be discussed, and the particular phenomenological method employed will be described. The phenomenological method will then be

evaluated in terms of such important issues as validity, reliability and generalizability.

Philosophical Assumptions of Natural Science Research in Psychology

The history of psychology credits Wundt's experimental laboratory of 1879 as giving birth to psychology's adoption of experimental science methodology. Since then, scientific psychology has proceeded with the assumption that it, like any other science deemed legitimate, be guided by the rules of experimental methodology. Human behaviour was viewed as being as mechanistic, quantifiable, and causally determined as any other events in the natural world. Inevitably, North American mainstream psychology found itself in the position of having to force its subject matter to conform to a pre-existing methodology, rather than developing methods appropriate to its subject matter (Aanstoos, 1984).

Within the social sciences in general, and psychology in particular, research has meant quantitative study - a search for order as revealed through the amount of change in one variable or factor when another is altered. Essentially, the approach of psychology when conceived of as a natural science has

been characterized as being: empirical, positivistic, reductionistic, analytic, predictive, quantitative, and objectively analyzed for cause and effect relationships by an independent observer (Giorgi, 1970). The assumption is that data obtained from human beings either conforms or can be made to conform to these criteria and that most questions concerning human behaviour are responsive to measurement. If they resist quantification, (as do many uniquely human characteristics such as love, hate, compassion, etc.), they have traditionally been avoided in the laboratory.

Most mainstream (natural science) research in psychology has as its aim the prediction and control of behaviour. Human behaviour is divided into manageable units or constructs. Ideas or questions generate testable hypotheses. Constructs are "operationalized" by being carefully defined in an attempt to eliminate subjectivity. Experimentation or investigation is completed under controlled conditions, such as a laboratory, in an attempt to control the influence of extraneous variables. Data are measured and quantified, and the hypothesis is either accepted or rejected according to previously agreed upon statistical procedures. The aim is to achieve reliability, that is, predictability and replicative consistency. The

meanings of quantitative results are sometimes ignored, or tentatively proposed in the "Discussion of Results" section of the research report. Human experience is frequently transformed into "brute data", and whatever is not measurable is often ignored (Taylor, 1979). This is because meaning, being qualitative in nature (and therefore unreliable), is resistant to reductive causal analysis.

Stigliano (1986) proposed that modern social science is in a state of crisis. He suggested that there has been a loss of faith in the natural science promise to develop laws of human behaviour, "that empirical social science either ignores the moral nature of human action, or ignores meaning, emotion, and purpose. Human life is too complex to be reduced to a set of variables regressing to a mean" (p.34). Underlying the entire approach of natural science, then, is the Cartesian assumption that there is an objective, knowable world that exists apart from the individual human mind. It is this basic assumption that the phenomenological method of research most strenuously seeks to challenge.

Philosophical Assumptions of Phenomenological Research in Psychology

Phenomenology, a movement that has its origins in philosophy, is still in the process of being conceptually and methodologically clarified. There are numerous interpretations of phenomenology among the philosophers themselves, as evidenced in the writings of Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre (Kockelmans, 1973). Within phenomenology, Husserl's assertion that consciousness is always consciousness of something has been a common theme (intentionality). While Husserl focused on the intentionality of consciousness, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre stressed the intentionality of behaviour - of man's basic relatedness to the world. The belief that the world as constructed by the physicist is more "real" than the world we perceive was called by Merleau-Ponty "the prejudice of the objective world" (1962). In his work, The Phenomenology of Perception, Merleau-Ponty (1962) stated:

> All my knowledge of the world, even my scientific knowledge, is gained from my own particular point of view, or from some experience of the world

> without which the symbol of science would be meaningless... Science has not, and never will have, by its nature, the same significance qua form of being as the world we perceive, for the simple reason that it is a rationale or explanation of that world (p.8).

Sartre (1943), echoing the same theme, wrote of man as a relational being to his world, and that "the principle of their being is the relation" (p.50). This relation, referred to in phenomenology as "co-constitutionality", is a fundamental acknowlegement and philosophical springboard for the phenomenological approach to understanding human experience.

Perhaps the most critical philosophical distinction between phenomenology and the natural science paradigm is phenomenology's assertion that we are of rather than in the world (Valle & King, 1978). Intentional behaviour is directed toward the world, it acts on the world and reveals the world to man. There is always an inseparable unity in the perceiving act and the perceived object. Each one "co-constitutes" the other. Hence complete objectivity, which is a human idea, becomes an empirical impossibility when applied to the study of human behaviour.

From the phenomenological point of view, the primary

task of psychology is to describe and reflectively analyze the concrete world of human lived-experience and behaviour (the "Lebenswelt" as Husserl termed it). Husserl's oft-quoted maxim "Unto the things themselves" reflected this concern for the a priori importance of man's lived-experience as the starting point for the understanding of human behaviour (Husserl, 1913). Methodologically, then, the research task of the phenomenological psychologist is to study the meaningful coherence of experience as it is lived in the everyday world. Rather than quantification, this task is seen as better served by the adoption of a descriptive approach.

Phenomenological researchers have called for an approach radically different to that of natural science methodology, so that psychology, set free from the bonds of natural science methodology, might yet become a "human" science (Alapack, 1975; Becker, 1986; Colaizzi, 1978; Giorgi, 1975; Halling, 1983; Polkinghorne, 1986; Stevick, 1971).

Methodological Choice: The Empirical Reflective Method

There is no one prescribed methodology for phenomenological research. It would be antithetical to the very purpose and philosophy of phenomenology to tie

it to the yoke of any one particular method. Because the task of the researcher is to go back to the phenomenon as it appears in itself - that is, to regard everything that is given in experience precisely as it manifests itself to an individual's consciousness in his/her life-world, the method or approach to the data interpretation must remain flexible and open. This is not to say that no guidelines for phenomenological methodology are being developed. Colaizzi (1978), Giorgi (1987), Wertz (1984), Aanstoos (1985), and Becker (1986) are among human science researchers who do concern themselves with developing methodological strategies in descriptive research that address such considerations as validity and reliability, without compromising the philosophical integrity of the basic tenets of phenomenology (Granit, 1981).

An Outline of Three Phenomenological Methods

Phenomenological researchers generally use three major variations of the phenomenological method: The individual, the reflective empirical, and the dialogal. An example of the individual phenomenological method is Alapack's "The Outlaw Relationship" (1975). Generally, researchers using this method use their own actual and imaginary experiences and those of others' written accounts (factual and fictional) and theories to develop

a thematic description of a phenomenon. Co-researchers, a term phenomenologists prefer over the word "subjects," are not directly employed in this approach.

The empirical reflective and the dialogal methods are similar in several ways. Both types of studies engage co-researchers, from whom descriptions are elicited. Both begin with an individual phenomenological report by the researcher, contain a thematization of all the descriptive protocols, and conclude with an extensive thematic description of the phenomenon. There are, however, differences between the two methodologies. Typically, the empirical phenomenologist examines descriptions written by the co-researchers, and is solely responsible for thematic abstractions obtained from the data. By contrast, the dialogal phenomenologist interviews the co-researchers orally, thematizes during the interview (as well as alone) and involves the co-researchers in that process (Granit, 1981).

Phenomenological methodologies range from fairly structured (e.g., Giorgi, 1975) to relatively unstructured (e.g., Alapack, 1975). These procedural differences reflect a difference in underlying assumptions. The dialogal school places a heavier emphasis on the intersubjective nature of meaning and

experience. The respondent is thus much more a true co-researcher in the dialogal method than in the empirical. Empirical reflective researchers, on the other hand, attempt to prevent their own perspectives from influencing the respondent by minimizing contact and not discussing their own points of view with the co-researchers. Both types of researchers try to avoid biasing the respondents, one by keeping the researcher's personal perspective hidden, the other by revealing it during the dialogal interview process.

The Rosenthal studies (Giorgi, 1970) showed that the effect of the researcher on research subjects cannot be neutralized in either experimental natural science type research or in phenomenological research, so the best alternative is to involve participants and train them to be reliable evaluation instruments (Combs, Richards, and Richards, 1976). Though dialogal researchers may discuss their own ideas with the co-researchers, they adopt a careful attitude of "letting-be" - of respecting the integrity of the response of the co-researcher as a fully representative example of h/er experience with the phenomenon. Two studies by Jourard (1968, 1971) suggested that self-disclosure by a researcher did not have the effect of imposing the researcher's views on co-researchers but rather freed respondents to disclose

their own views.

Empirical and dialogal reflective research are both "empirical" in the sense that they are "based on the data of immediate pretheoretical experience" (Wertz, 1985, p. 32). Their aim is to disclose meaning through reflection. It is not a matter of the researcher imposing meaning, for..." reflection is not speculation, but genuine finding, requiring the most rigorous grasp of the essence of the phenomenon. The researcher thereby grasps the whole of the phenomenon through the part expressed by the subject, making explicit the implicit root of the matter" (Wertz, 1985, p. 32). For the purposes of this investigation of eye contact, the empirical reflective approach will be used. The reasons for this choice will be discussed in the following chapter.

Evaluating the Phenomenological Method

Phenomenology has been critized for being too subjective, introspective, "merely" the study of individual cases (i.e. non-generalizable), anti-scientific, speculative, and lacking rigour and method (Giorgi, 1984). Prior to adopting any methodology, "scientific" or otherwise, the researcher

must critically evaluate his/her approach to feel confident that the chosen method is most suited to answer the research question(s).

Within the natural science paradigm, research is typically evaluated according to its validity, reliability and generalizability. Since phenomenological methods are derived from an alternative scientific paradigm, these traditional evaluation criteria should be re-examined (Granit, 1984).

Validity

Validity is an important consideration in all research. Whereas validity in traditional psychological research refers to the adequacy of the operationalizing process (does the measuring instrument actually measure the hypothesized variable?), in phenomenological research it concerns the issue of researcher bias. Wertz (1984) stated that the question is whether the researcher's description closely reflects the truth of the subject's lived- experience with the phenomenon. In order to determine whether the derived descriptive analyses are accurate, "one must determine the precision of the measuring instrument, which in this case is the researcher" (Granit, 1981, p.15).

There are several ways potential researcher bias can be reduced in phenomenological research. Initially, the

researcher addresses and makes conscious his or her own preconceptions about any biases regarding the phenomenon prior to proceeding with data analysis. This is often referred to as as the "Individual Phenomenological Report". Interviewing techniques such as those described by Becker (1986) help facilitate self-disclosure of the co-researchers unencumbered by the personal expectations of the researcher.

Frequently the researcher can validate results by referring the final themes back to the original data to check for interpretive accuracy. The process is dynamic and dialogal between the researcher and the data. The meanings arrived at should never sever all connection with the original protocols. The researcher goes beyond what is given in the original data, and at the same time, stays with it. The necessary and essential structures of the phenomenon which arise from the researcher's intuitive skills must be a faithful reflection of the phenomenon to which the data refer. Of interest is Wertz's (1984) conclusion:

> These criteria for validity are of course far more stringent than that of experimentally supported hypotheses since they demand veridical reference to every actual subject, every bit of actual data, and in the case of general

> assertions, every possible (not merely probable) manifestation of the phenomenon included in the specified scope of the formulation (p.45).

The final test of validity, and the most important, is whether the co-researchers find their own experience reflected sensitively and accurately in the final thematic descriptions.

Reliability

Regarding issues of reliability, in natural science research, if the controls are adequate, replication should yield the same results. Similarly, in phenomenological research, if bias is minimized, then replication should yield similar, but not necessarily the same results. In natural science research, the researcher compromises on applicability to real life experience for control in the interests of generalizability and statistical confidence in his or her results. Since different methods lead to different results, the phenomenologist trades such confidence for a comprehensive, meaningful contextual description of human experience.

Generalizability

Phenomenological results are not generalizable in the usual sense of the term, since the method does not involve random sampling and statistical analysis.

Statistical generalization is not the purpose of phenomenological research. Instead, one considers the results to be generally shared. Intersubjective agreement becomes an important avenue for not only enriching and adding to the results of an investigation, but for communicating and eventually offering possibilities for generalization, to the extent that this is a desired goal of phenomenological research. If one has handled the potential biases well, one considers the results generalizable to the extent that they are generally shared by other people.

Some researchers have proposed a synthesis of the two approaches as the optimal approach for human science research (Gendlin, 1962; Stigliano, 1986). Gendlin (1962), for example, suggested using phenomenological methods to refine definitions for use in natural science research, definitions based on lived experience rather than on operational techniques. Miles and Huberman (1984), indicated that the two paradigms are not as differentiated in practice as they are in theory. They call for the use of a more "ecumenical epistemology," one that combines the greatest strengths of the two approaches in whatever ways most fully address the question(s) under investigation.

In conclusion, it would seem desirable that

professional researchers in the social sciences overcome their own adversarial biases of the either/or stance so often inherent in such statements as "natural science versus phenomenology", and draw upon the strengths of both in the study of human behaviour.

CHAPTER IV

THE METHOD

This chapter begins by addressing the rationale for the particular phenomenological method I chose for my study of eye contact. I will then describe the specific procedure that was adopted, the criteria for subject selection, and outline the manner in which data were collected and analyzed.

Rationale

Natural science research on eye contact and gaze, as outlined in the literature review, tends to examine only one or a few variables of eye contact at a time. The investigator is left with an incomplete and fragmented picture of the phenomenon. Theories of visual perception derived from natural science research appear incomplete and inconclusive. For example, one paradigm for perception in natural science research, referred to as the " camera-photograph model", describes visual perception as the process of arriving at clear and distinct "pictures" of the world (McConville, 1978). The problem with this model of perception is that it is limited. Meaning, we discover, is often ambiguous and ineffable, defying attempts at rational comprehension

(McConville, 1978). The phenomenon of mutual gaze is more than the simple mechanical act of looking at and being looked at by others. The task of the phenomenological researcher is to elucidate this "more".

Phenomenological writing on the topic appeared to offer a more in-depth interpretation of the essence of the phenomenon (Alapack, 1975; McConville, 1978). Due to the silent nature of gaze, we appear often unaware of the phenomenon. It seemed a challenge to attempt to bring this very human experience from an implicit to an explicit awareness. I felt that phenomenological research methods, whose aims are to enrich our understanding of the structures in experience by describing their parts and the relationship among them (Polkinhorne, 1979), best served the purposes of this research.

The Co-Researchers

The criteria for subject selection is an important concern for the phenomenological researcher. Participants are most frequently selected according to their ability to access the particular phenomenon under investigation. Generally, human science researchers seek out co-researchers who are able and willing to describe verbally their everyday experiences of the phenomenon being studied. Becker (1986) encouraged

researchers to strive for subject homogeneity if possible (e.g., age, sex, educational level etc.). The data obtained from such a group usually provides the researcher with a deeper understanding of the structure of the phenomenon being elucidated. Others (Alapack, 1973; Aanstoos, 1983; Wertz, 1984), found that extreme contrasts among subjects were more helpful in achieving the same end. The co-researchers in this study could be described as being relatively homogenous, with the exception of one, whose age differed considerably from the others.

Two males and three females agreed to be co-researchers. Three were graduate students in the Faculty of Education (one male, age 37; two females, age 41 and 43.) The fourth was an 18-year-old female high school student and the fifth was a 45-year-old male with a Masters of Arts degree in Industrial Design. All co-researchers were known to the researcher and were assessed as being particularly suitable for their ability to access and articulate their experience of the phenomenon.

Procedure: The Empirical Reflective Method

Preliminary reflection suggested that the "Empirical Reflective" method described by Giorgi (1975) and Wertz (1986) might be the most effective in researching the phenomenon of gaze and eye contact. The dialogal, or the interview method described in the previous chapter was not chosen, since the primary aim was to gain access to the phenomenon itself: to gather uniquely personal descriptive data from each individual's private experiences with the phenomenon. Since it seemed important to minimize the possibility of my influencing the quality of the responses, the attempt was made to have the phenomenon articulated by each participant relatively free of direct researcher involvement.

The five co-researchers were asked to describe in written form their in situ experiences and thoughts regarding eye contact or mutual gaze over a period of approximately one week. Descriptive diaries were kept by the co-researchers, who recorded whatever thoughts or ideas came into their minds on the topic. The question they were asked was: "Could you describe in full, just as the thoughts come to you, without necessarily analyzing your statements, how you feel about giving and receiving eye contact with others? What have you noticed about it?" The aim was to gather data on personal descriptions of everyday events, common

encounters, and typical eye contact happenings as spontaneously experienced by people in their life-world.

Listed below are the steps that were followed in analyzing the written protocols of each co-researcher according to the Empirical Reflective method as described by Giorgi (1975):

1. Each protocol was typed from hand-written diaries. Careful attention was paid to the manner in which each participant's writing style varied. Some chose a more narrative style of writing, while others jotted down short, one or two word phrases. Others used a combination of the two. Some reflected on and analyzed their statements, others did not.

2. Protocols were read in their entirety several times to get a sense of the overall impact of each co-researcher's encounter with the phenomenon. Close attention was paid to statements which were repeated or the particular words which were chosen to describe the individual participants' thoughts.

3. Excerpts from the diaries were extracted which were either uniquely important or relevant to the particular co-researcher, or helped elucidate common themes or patterns found in several or all of the protocols. For example, one co-researcher stated: "It's related to how I feel about myself - if I give more than the other person I feel more in control."

4. When necessary, two levels of interpretive abstraction were applied to each excerpt to clarify meaning. Often it was possible to eliminate the paraphrasing process for a particular excerpt when the co-researcher's own descriptions were fully adequate to elucidate the central themes. The first level involved paraphrasing the meaning of the co-researcher's words into psychological language. (In the case of the above excerpt, this was paraphrased as: "Eye contact as an indicator of her sense of control or power in a specific situation"). The second level involved the formulation of a theme which was intended to capture the essence of that particular excerpt. Again, using the above excerpt as an example, the theme of the second level abstraction might be described as: Eye contact as indicative of Power/Dominance, Self-Confidence.

5. In order to access the universal structure of the phenomenon, the thematic abstractions of the individual protocols were cross-compared for contextual thematic similarities and were then synthesized into a representative and generalized description of that particular theme.

6. For the purposes of clarity and conciseness, the tables present excerpts from the diary notations on the column to the left, and the central themes revelatory of the structure of mutual gaze to the right.

This study seeks to investigate several questions:

Since, to my knowledge, no phenomenological research of this kind has been done on this topic, would the data and the results of the analyses substantiate existing philosophical and theoretical work on eye contact by phenomenological writers such as Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and McConville, or lend support to either of the opposing philosophical positions of Plato or Aristotle as described in the literature review?

Would major differences that reflect age or gender emerge from the themes of the data?

How effective would the Empirical Reflective method prove to be in accessing the phenomenon of eye contact or mutual gaze? Would the results provide us with a deeper, more complete picture of the essence of this silent form of communication?

Would the results of this investigation have practical implications for increasing the quality and the effectiveness of interpersonal communication, particularly for those who work in the teaching or the helping professions?

The Issue of Bracketing

Before proceeding with Chapter V where the results of the protocol analyses will be discussed, it is necessary to comment on my own perspective regarding this project, and in particular to deal with the issue of bracketing. In choosing a subject I wish to investigate, I am of necessity engaged - that is, I am actively and personally involved in the phenomenon. The very choice of the project suggests that it is a phenomenon of which I already have, before formal study, a lived understanding (Titelman, 1979). In this sense, then, I am invevitably a subject in my own study.

As stated in the introduction, I have long had a fascination with the eyes. I sense that what I <u>see</u> is possibly the primary sensory key to intuiting my world. "In awe" of the phenomenon, I can sense its mystery and potency. I have my own "theories" about eye contact. For example, I "think" that people who are unable to "look you in the eye" when speaking are possibly insecure, embarrassed, hostile, shy, or a combination of these characteristics. People who sustain a deep, intense gaze seem powerful to me, in control. I can, and often do "project" onto others what I <u>think</u> their gaze may be telling me. I wonder and muse over what others may feel about the phenomenon and if they share

my observations. I do believe, as Leonardo da Vinci once said, that "the eyes are the window to the soul."

These are among the several preconceptions that I must first bring into my own awareness, and then make every effort to suspend, or "bracket". Bracketing is unlike any kind of hypothesis checking or deductive logic. More specifically, it involves the researcher using each description to immerse herself freshly in the situation just as it was lived by the co-researcher. The researcher slows down, lingers, "patiently dwelling" in the description, allowing the immanent structures and meanings to reveal themselves (Giorgi, 1975). The researcher's approach is somewhat paradoxical. Research is like a tabula rasa, with data forming new impressions. Consequently, the researcher is prepared, yet receptive, knowledgeable yet naive. Personal life events, as well as aspects of the phenomenon that are highlighted by my own experiences compose the lens through which I see the phenomenon. Once aware of these pre-understandings, I am more able to set them aside and am less likely to impose them upon the research participants (Becker, 1986).

CHAPTER V

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents descriptions of each participant's experience of eye contact or mutual gaze. An analysis of each person's diary is presented in Tables 1 -5. On the left hand side of column one, excerpts from the diary notations are presented in the order that they were written and are numbered sequentially (See original descriptive diaries in Appendices 1-5). In column two, directly across from each excerpt, are outlined the central themes and interpretive analyses that help to reveal the structure of the phenomenon of mutual gaze. An annotated descriptive interpretation of each of the five diaries, derived from the Tables, is then presented, supported by samples of relevant data. The numbers following these data excerpts refer to the original descriptions given in the Tables. This procedure, similar to the methods used by Giorgi (1984), Alapack (1985), and Osborne, Angus and Newton (1986), involves a reflective process of systematic interpretation, paraphrasing and thematizing of each individual's protocol. Finally, an integrative reflective analysis is presented. Here the

central themes from the protocols are cross-compared for differences and similarities, resulting in a generalized description of the essential themes of the phenomenon as a whole.

Protocol Descriptions

Interpretative Synthesis of Rosalind's Diary (Table 1)

Rosalind's diary begins with a description of an eye contact experience at a party. She is struck by the "immediacy" of eye contact to convey unmistakable messages (e.g., "His eye contact sent me a loud and clear message;" (1). This aspect of mutual gaze as an indicator of sexual interest towards another was felt as "very strong - an unmistakable sexual come-on;" (2). The encounter, non-verbal and silent, is sensed as a potent vehicle through which R. can search for confirmation of interest from another. Twice she describes how the message sent from his eyes was "unmistakable," as if the message from the other's gaze is in some way a direct enounter with the "truth" (e.g., "loud," "clear," unmistakable," "immediate;" (1,2,3). This truth is perceived by R. as powerful, direct, and absolute.

Experiencing eye contact as this intimate can be so powerful that it is felt physically in the body (e.g., "It was so immediate it almost knocked me off my feet;"

Table 1

Thematic Abstraction of Rosalind's Diary (Age 43)

Excerpts from Diary Notations	Central Themes as Revelatory of the Structure of Gaze
1. His eye contact immediately sent me a loud and clear message.	Immediacy of E.C. (message-sender). Pre-reflective awareness of what the message is. Silence of phenomenon, yet described as "loud." E.C. as messenger of "the truth" ("clear").
2. It was a very strong - an unmistakable sexual come-on.	E.C. functions as sexual initiator. Projection - possibly ascribing to others what we feel they may be thinking or feeling. The eyes "can speak." Message of E.C. is unmistakable (i.e., "the truth") as perceived by the receiver.
3. There was no mistaking his message, and it was so immediate it almost knocked me off my feet.	Immediacy of the phenomenon. Power of gaze - almost felt physically. "Truth" of the message - "no mistaking."
4. I noticed a strange thing in one of my classes. Someone else had asked a really good question, and the professor looked straight at me the whole time he was giving his response. I felt unclear why he was focusing on me. The other girl must have felt so humiliated.	Unspoken rules regarding use of gaze were broken. Validation/Invalidation of the existence of another. Message described as "unclear", yet clear. Projection: how gaze affects others. Broken rules results in empathy for the other.
5. I felt confused, but it was flattering in this case.	Validation of self, received at cost to another. Guilt? ("I felt confused"). Confirmation of interest from another. Intentionality of gaze. Power of gaze.
6. In another situation, I was desperately trying to avoid eye contact with the professor, because I didn't want to get chosen as a group discussion leader.	Intentionality of gaze in either approaching or avoiding the lived-world. Avoidance of power of the gaze. Attempts to cancel co-constitutional aspect of gaze by avoidance of E.C. Fear of gaze.

7. If you don't make eye contact, they don't see you. It's like I'm invisible.	"Make" E.C. - Gaze as a tool we use as we wish. R.D. Laing: making oneself invisible by denying gaze. Submission. Closing off channels of communication.
8. I use it a lot in counselling - it's pretty powerful.	Intentionality ("use it"). A powerful tool.
9. I look straight into people's eyes and keep the focus directed so they don't go off the topic.	Dominance. Control/Submission. Manipulative - Intentional aspects of E.C. Power of gaze to facilitate a desired outcome.
10. Unless I maintain eye contact as much as possible, they feel that there's a lack of interest in what they're saying.	Projection - sense of invalidating others by lack of direct E.C. Validation/Invalidation of others. Lack of gaze as signal of disinterest in another Quantification of gaze.
11. Teenagers tend not to look you in the eye. Why is this? Sarah always looks away. She will never look directly at me.	Rules of gaze. Theorizing on meaning of gaze. "Never"? Importance of direct visual engagement.
12. This is her way of showing anger. She shuts me out. By not looking at me she doesn't have to deal with me and what I'm saying.	E.C. as indicative of affiliation/aggression. Intentionality of gaze. Closing the door on intimacy. Invalidation of another. Making oneself invisible.
13. She's closing off from reality - not dealing with the situation. She's not acknowledging me.	Projection. Invalidation of the other. Denial of "reality" - refuses to be open to the situation by denying E.C. to others.
14. When I'm angry or don't have control I look away. They get the message.	Gaze as intentional. Avoidance of gaze to gain control. "They" receive the message yet nothing needs be said. Power of the phenomenon - silent, yet potent message - sender.

14. I used it with Bob all the time. It can be a seductive thing. I maintained eye contact with him and was getting a sexual come-on in eye contact from him. I made a mental note to myself: "He's coming on - be wary."	Intentionality - gaze as a "weapon" for sexual conquest. Control, submission of the other by maintaining gaze. Co-constitutionality of gaze - each getting the essential message of the other. Silent dance of the eyes indicates sexual attraction. Immediacy of gaze complements the immediacy of the phenomenon of sexual attraction. We can send out signals through gaze (information-seeking) to see if there is a response, without having to resort to verbal overtures, which are more threatening (i.e. avoidance and possible rejection).
15. In distasteful situations I give no eye contact at all. I avoid making contact by giving no eye contact.	Avoidance of E.C. Fear of intimacy? Fear of the idea that the "Eye is the window to the soul?" Gaze as intentional: "make," "give", etc.
16. The first thing I look at is the eyes; they tell more than anything else.	Primacy of vision. Eyes as window to the soul. Information-seeking; we read gaze.
17. Sometimes I'm uncomfortable maintaining eye contact. When you maintain eye contact though, it means you're more comfortable with yourself. It's related to how I feel about myself. If I give more than the other person I feel more in control.	Gaze as threatening (biologically based signal for aggression in animal world). Gaze as related to self-esteem. Control/Dominance. Amount of gaze given or received is seen as a quantifiable factor in assessing self-esteem of self and others.

18. In a seminar some professors only gave eye contact to one or two students - the rest of us were non-existent as far as I was concerned. It felt lousy.

Validation/Invalidation of others.
Lack of E.C. = "non-existence."
Power of gaze (or lack of) to evoke strong feelings in others.

19. My hairdresser said to me the other day, "You look like you've been having an affair - I can see it in your eyes." I guess that's true - you do sparkle through the eyes.

Eyes as objects expressing inner lived-experience.
Window to the soul - intimacy.
Information-seeking.
E.C. as messenger of "the truth."
Soul sparkles through the eyes (Platonic efflux theory).

20. One professor I've had recently maintains a lot of eye contact with <u>all</u> the students while she's teaching. She's gotten prettier in my mind because of this.

"Rules" have been maintained.
Validates existence of others.
Teacher is validated in turn.
Intentionality of gaze in pedagogical or group situations.

21. She's quite overweight, but I think she's very attractive because of how she is as a person - she's beautiful really.

Gaze as window to the soul.
Gaze projects inner beauty outwards - our essence is captured by others through gaze.
Gaze as mediating force between inner and outer life-world.
Intentional.
We can validate our existence for ourselves by how we use gaze (self-validation).
Important avenue for having others see us as we wish to be seen.

23. When I meet someone, I start with the eyes, work my way down, and then come back to the eyes again.

Information-seeking.
Primacy of visual perception.

(3). In addition to sensing strong interest from the other, R. in turn transmits her own unique energy and message through the gaze. In order for gaze to be experienced as truly "mutual", to be fully communicative, it seems that a dimension of openness and reciprocity must exist between the two observers. When this affective channel of communication is completely open, the sensation is one of a "streaming" into the consciousness of another (Buber, 1970). The Platonic efflux theory of gaze, which maintains that mutual gaze is not static, but that it has its own energy or "fire," is a predominant theme in R.'s descriptions (2,9,15,20). It seems that this exchange of energy can be directly intuited or sensed by another.

The idea that mutual gaze normally appears to function within the parameters of distinct patterns or "rules" is also revealed in R.'s comments (e.g., "I noticed a strange thing in one of my classes ... Someone else had asked a really good question, and the professor looked straight at me the whole time he was giving his response;" 4). She reports how she felt "unclear" as to why she was getting this unexpected attention - as if somehow the professor was "breaking the rules" of normal or expected gazing behaviour. R. describes how she

feels flattered, somewhat confused, and possibly somewhat guilty about "stealing" eye contact (i.e.,attention) from another. She empathically feels for the other person in this situation, onto whom she projects feelings of humiliation (e.g., "The other girl must have felt so humiliated;" 4).

In another classroom situation, R. describes how "the professor maintains a lot of eye contact with all the students while she's teaching." (21) R. seems to feel that this is the "correct" way gaze should be used in such situations (i.e., the "rules " have been maintained). When gaze is experienced as mutual and "equitably" distributed, all the students feel equally validated, and the teacher experiences validation in return (e.g., "She's gotten prettier in my mind because of this;" 21). In yet another classroom situation, she described how the professor's visual engagement with only one or two students had the effect of making her feel as if she did not exist (e.g., "the rest of us were non-existent as far as I was concerned. It felt lousy;" 19). According to R., gaze appears to have a powerful capacity to validate or invalidate the existence of others.

Another theme that emerges recurrently in R.'s description concerns the "intentional" aspects of the

phenomenon. The word "intentional" can be interpreted on two levels. As used in phenomenology, intentionality refers to the idea that human behaviour is always seen as a meaningful expression of the co-constitutional nature of man and the world. Neither man nor the world can be defined independently of the other. In this study, however, eye contact reveals itself to be intentional in the more common sense of the word as well - i.e., an act that is done with a deliberate intention or purpose in mind. This aspect of intentionality is seen in the use of such expressions as "make" eye contact, "use" eye contact, "give" eye contact, "break" eye contact etc.

R. describes how she senses the intentionality of gaze and how she uses it in either approaching (reaching out to) or avoiding (shutting out) the lived-world. For example, she says: "I was desperately trying to avoid eye contact ... because I didn't want to get chosen as group discussion leader" (6); "If you don't make eye contact, they don't see you. It's like I'm invisible" (7); and "I use it a lot in counselling ... I look straight into people's eyes and keep the focus directed so they don't go off the topic." (9) R. understands the power of gaze, or gaze aversion to facilitate a desired

outcome. She is also sensitive to the manner in which one's gaze can be used to dominate and control others. For example, R. describes how her daughter "deliberately" denies her mother eye contact: "This is her way of showing anger. By not looking at me she doesn't have to deal with me and what I'm saying" (11, 12, 13).

Mutual gaze is sometimes experienced by R. as uncomfortable and anxiety-producing (14, 18). Since gaze is a well-known signal for aggression in the animal kingdom, it is not surprising that people can experience mutual gaze as either aggressive or affiliative in intent, and consequently can feel threatened or physiologically aroused by it.

Another aspect of the phenomenon that emerges from R.'s protocol is the idea that one's gazing behaviour is indicative of one's level of self-esteem. Those who engage in deeper, more sustained gazing are perceived by R. as being more "in control", dominant, and more "comfortable with themselves" (18). She seems to unconsciously quantify gaze and uses this quantification as an index of how she feels about herself during encounters with others (e.g., "If I give more than the other person I feel more in control;" 18).

R.'s description of her encounter with her

hairdresser (20) demonstrates vividly why the eyes have been referred to as the "window to the soul." The gaze is alive, it is profoundly intimate, and our eyes project the essence of our inner lived-experience to the world around us for others to see and evaluate (e.g., "I guess it's true - you do sparkle through the eyes;" 20). R. senses the primacy of visual perception when she says: "The first thing I look at are the eyes; they tell more than anything else" (17); and, "When I meet someone, I start with the eyes, work my way down, and then come back to the eyes again" (23).

In R.'s protocol, important aspects of her current life are reflected. Recently single, she senses the power of gaze as a potent courier of sexual interest and/or affection (2, 3, 15, 20). She describes how "I used it with Bob all the time ... it can be a seductive thing" (14). Her profession as a counsellor reflects her sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others, and to the ability of gaze to validate or invalidate the existence of others (4, 5, 7, 12, 19, 21). R. also seems very aware of how eye contact is often consciously and purposefully used when she relates that: "In distasteful situations I give no eye contact at all ... I avoid making eye contact by giving no eye contact"

(15). Other excerpts from her data suggest that gaze has a purposeful, deliberate aspect to it (6, 8, 12, 14). In general, R.'s data seem to reveal that she is a person who is acutely aware of the subtlety and power of reciprocal gaze.

Interpretive Synthesis of Grant's Diary (Table 2)

As an artist, Grant "values his sight enormously" (6), and senses the mystical, potent, and ineffable aspects of mutual gaze as a unique phenomenal category. He writes: "It's such an important channel for appreciating the world and taking it in. It gives me a sense of wonder, of reverence;" 8). Grant's descriptions often seem to focus on how gaze is "read," and concentrates upon explicating the manner in which we receive and interpret eye contact messages from others. He is very sensitive to the phenomenon and to the primacy of visual perception (e.g.,"I can tell a lot about people, even strangers, by how we look at each other;" 3). G. frequently "wonders how it's being read - if it's being misinterpreted" (7). He senses that one's eye contact with others can act as an external barometer of one's internal feeling states, and that one can use it in a deliberate way to open oneself up to or shut oneself off from the external world (5). G.'s descriptions reveal that he understands that gaze is

Table 2

Thematic Abstraction of Grant's Diary (Age 37)

Excerpts from Diary Notations	Central Themes as Revelatory of the Structure of Gaze
1. At the busstop, my eyes met those of another man's for a brief second. When I looked at him, he'd look away from me... he would look furtively away whenever I caught his eye. It was like a kind of game.	Immediacy of impact of vision. Information-seeking. Prescribed rules for "the game." Cultural/biological basis of gaze - signal of aggression in animal kingdom.
2. He seemed insecure, as if my looking at him was threatening.	Aggression - threat of "the gaze." Projecting onto others what we feel they are thinking.
3. For me, the eyes have it - I guess you'd call it intuitive - I can tell a lot about people, even strangers, by how we look at each other.	Primacy of visual perception. Eyes as "windows of the soul." Information-seeking. Power of gaze to reveal "a lot" - even about strangers.
4. I am told it's easy to make eye contact with me - I like to acknowledge people by making eye contact, by really "seeing" them.	Gaze has its own unique personality, sensed by others. Validation of existence of others, by "really seeing" them.
5. If I'm feeling external, I use eye contact a lot. If I'm feeling withdrawn, or private, or internal, I break eye contact quickly, or don't give it in the first place.	Eye contact as external barometer of internal feeling state. Intentionality of E.C. - "give it" "break it." Closing off from or opening oneself out to the life-world. Gaze is powerful, and we can control how we use it to a significant extent.
6. I'm a very visual person - graphic - as an artist I value my sight enormously.	The miracle of vision. A gift, highly valued. Can the artist see what others miss?

7. Often I wonder how it's being read - if it's being misinterpreted.

8. It's such an important channel for appreciating the world and taking it in. It gives me a sense of wonder, of reverence.

9. Frequently I establish eye contact with the same strangers walking around the campus. When we look at each other, even though I don't know who they are, there's a flash of recognition - as if we do know each other in some way.

10. With some people I can hold the gaze longer and it's comfortable. Other times it's very uncomfortable - it's threatening. It depends on how I feel at the time.

11. Looking into your own eyes forces you to ask yourself who you are. It's almost like there's an incongruence between the image on the mirror and who you really are. It seems you question yourself about who you "think" you are. It's a confrontational experience - I try to find the genuine me.

Information seeking - E.C. as the source of information or misinformation.
Can cause anxiety.
Gaze is read by others - sometimes incorrectly.

Power of gaze.
Mystical, ineffable essence of gaze.
Primacy of gaze as route to co-constituting our world - E.C. as an "important channel" between inner and outer worlds of experience.

Intentionality - deliberate, playful, a "game"?
Our common humanity expressed through the gaze.
Pre-verbal "knowing" of others.
Intuitive - window to the soul.
Immediacy of gaze: "flash" of recognition.
Projective energy of gaze - streaming quality of E.C. (Platonic efflux theory).

Rules of gaze.
Signal for affiliation and/or aggression.
Withholding gaze decreases anxiety level within.
Intentionality of gaze.
Gaze can allow others to enter inside - at times G. feels it is necessary to draw a curtain over this "window to the soul."

Power, mystery of gazing into own eyes.
Begs the question of "who we really are" v.s. who we "think" we are.
Gaze as access to "the truth" - "the genuine me."
Do others see us as we see ourselves?
Intimacy with self through the experience of looking into our own gaze.
Confusing, confrontational, information-seeking.

12. ...my Dad, when he wanted to make me feel guilty, would make me look in the mirror. "Go take a good look at yourself" he'd say, and I would go into the bathroom, close the door, and laugh, stick out my tongue and make faces at myself.	Control/dominance/submission. Courier of affection/dislike/disapproval. Power of gaze - self-reflection will reveal the "truth" - i.e. what a "bad boy" you are.
13. With my friend...I've noticed how her eye contact has changed since we became intimate. It's as if there's a certain trust, a deepening of our eye contact... The deepening of the relationship seems to be reflected in a parallel in the way we look at each other now.	E.C. as indicator of intimacy and the depth of that intimacy. Deepening of gaze reflects deeper commitment of sexual connectedness. Courier of affection. Trust, allows the other to enter into our soul - allows access to the many levels of the other.
14. I'm open; I'm the observer and the observed.	Co-constitutionality of gaze. Gaze allows the other in - opens us to being vulnerable, yet confirmed by the other.
15. She doesn't maintain it as long as I do. Intimacy is not easy for her.	Gaze is (unconsciously) quantitatively measured. Gaze as an indicator of self-esteem. Gaze is related to level of intimacy sensed in relationship - this may be perceived differently.
16. One of the hardest things for her is to reveal herself. She feels she loses some of herself when we become intimate and too close. This shows in her eye contact. She needs her solitude. She's unsure. It's like the chain is as strong as its weakest link.	Lack of eye contact means lack of sharing in intimate relationship. Fear of loss of self by being "seen for what we are?" Window to the soul seems partly shuttered, closed off. Lack of E.C. denies deeper access to the other Indicative of self-esteem/lack of? Defensiveness - the other does not find it easy "to reveal herself."
17. The sum total is that it can only go as deep as you're both willing to go with it.	Mysterious, hypnotic power of gaze - possibility of getting "lost in the abyss of the soul." Do we drew a "line" somewhere to avoid being pulled into an endless spiral - deeper and deeper into the soul of ourselves or another? Mutual gaze can be too intimate, uncomfortable, threatening.

deliberate, intentional, and that we are able to conrol how we "use it" to a significant extent (e.g., "If I'm feeling external, I use eye contact a lot. If I'm feeling withdrawn or private, or internal, I break eye contact quickly, or don't give it in the first place;" 5).

Grant senses the ability of one's gaze to validate others. He describes how "I like to acknowledge people by making eye contact, by really 'seeing' them" (4). He is aware that there are "rules to the game" (1, 9), and realizes that he is inclined to assess the quality of his eye contact with significant others, interpreting it as an indication of the level of intimacy he senses is present in his relationships (e.g., "I've noticed how her eye contact has changed since we became intimate. It's as if there's a certain trust, a deepening of our eye contact;" 13). The deepening of this relationship is reflected "in a parallel in the way we look at each other now" (13). In this instance, the special quality of their mutual gaze reflects the quality of the love relationship which is experienced as a deepening of trust between G. and his partner. This increased sense of trust in turn allows each to enter into the soul of the other (13, 14), and mutual gaze is experienced as

deeply intimate and mutually validating.

Mutual gaze can serve as the vehicle through which we allow the other "in" - it opens us to being vulnerable, yet confirmed by the other. G. says that his partner doesn't maintain eye contact as long as he does (15), and speculates on the possible reasons for this perceived inequity (e.g., "Intimacy is not easy for her ... One of the hardest things for her is to reveal herself. She feels she loses some of herself when we become intimate or too close;" 15). This suggests that he senses that the eyes are "the window to the soul", and that the experience of having another see clearly through this window can be anxiety-provoking. Perhaps he senses that mutual gaze could reveal her soul, her own "truth." He speculates: "She needs her solitude. She's unsure" (16).

G.'s description of painting a self-portrait reveals another interesting aspect of the phenomenon: "Looking into your own eyes forces you to ask yourself who you are. It's almost as if there's an incongruence between the image on the mirror and who you really are" (11). Encountering our own gaze seems to arouse a sensation of ambiguity within ourselves, as if gazing deeply into our own eyes will reveal our own "truth" to ourselves. Are we really who or what we <u>think</u> we are? In gazing deeply

into the window of one's own soul, one seeks information about one's very essence, and may encounter the most intimate activities of one's own consciousness. G. finds this experience to be disturbing (e.g., "It's a confrontational experience ... I try to find the genuine me;" 11).

G. is also aware of the way gaze can be used to control or dominate others. He describes how his father, when he was angry with G., would demand that he go to a mirror and "take a good look at yourself" (12). Supposedly, confronting his own child-spirit would reveal the "truth" of his own inadequacies, and allow him to see himself as his father does.

On a different level, G. seems to be aware that looking at others is essentially a searching, information-seeking process. This is described in his accounts of mutual gaze with strangers (1, 3, 9). "When we look at each other, even though I don't know who they are, there's a flash of recognition - as if we <u>do</u> know each other in some way" (9). The word "flash" suggests the arresting immediacy of the phenomenon. This provides him with a feeling of knowing others, even strangers, on a pre-reflective, pre-verbal level: "For me the eyes have it - I guess you'd call it intuitive - I can tell a lot about people, even strangers, by how we

look at each other" (3). His comments suggest the theme that visual perception is predominant amongst the senses.

G.'s data imply that our common humanity can be affirmed through mutual gaze. He senses that the experience has an ineffable, mysteriously powerful quality to it, again suggestive of Plato's efflux theory of vision, and of the projective energy which Buber (1970) described as the "streaming" quality of mutual gaze.

Interpretive Synthesis of Leslie's Diary (Table 3)

Leslie is a verbal and intelligent 18-year-old high school student. Her diary provided some interesting clues to examining the phenomenon of eye contact from the point of view of a younger person. As in the other diaries, the intentionality of gaze is a strong theme in her data (1, 2, 4, 7, 12, 14). For example, she comments: "I've noticed how men and women use it ... when they want to impress someone or are attracted sexually to someone;" 1); and, "I've used it fairly successfully just to challenge and see if I can 'score' with another person - usually a guy!" (2). Her awareness of gaze as intentional is frequently evidenced in her choice of words and phrases (e.g.,"use it;" "get

Table 3

Thematic Abstraction of Leslie's Diary (Age 18)

Excerpts from Diary Notations	Central Themes as Revelatory of the Structure of Gaze
1. I never realized how much goes on with eye contact until I started to think about it. I've noticed men and women use it (maybe unconsciously, but I think also deliberately) when they want to impress someone, or are attracted sexually to someone.	We are often unaware of the phenomenon. Intentionality of gaze ("use it"). Gaze as a sexual initiator. Pre-reflective, pre-cognitive, yet used "deliberately."
2. Sometimes I've used it fairly successfully just to challenge and see if I can "score" with another person (usually a guy!). Then I feel a bit guilty after if I "get what I want" because I think maybe I've been devious - less than honest somehow. (Practicing witchcraft?)	Potent mystical power of gaze to "get what we want." A weapon against which others are defenceless. "Evil Eye" phenomenon (witchcraft). Intentionality ("used", "challenge", "score"). Sexuality - part of the mating game.
3. When I'm introduced to someone, I'm so busy looking into their faces (especially the eyes) that their name usually escapes me totally. I have to make a great effort to listen and not just "look."	Primacy of visual perception. Information-seeking - we "read" a situation with the giving and receiving of eye contact.
4. When I'm walking down the street, feeling sexy or attractive that day, I'm pleased when I get eye contact from others.	Validation, confirmation of visual appeal, of seeing and being seen in the life-world. Related to self-esteem, which fluctuates. Intentionality.
5. If, however, I'm feeling "ugly", I think "Oh no - that person thinks I'm ugly too" - or just a glance from someone can tell me what they think of me. Is that similar to being paranoid?	Projection. Power of a glance - immediacy of the message. Information-seeking - seeking validation from others through the glance. E.C. as message-sender of "the truth." Window to the soul - fear of being seen for "what we really are?" Am I "reading" the other correctly? Self-analysis - "paranoid"?

6. There is nothing greater than really making close eye contact with someone you're involved with. - It's like we are one. We totally understand each other.	Co-constitutionality of gaze. Allows for "total" access to the other. Intimacy of gaze. Validation of self through mutual gaze. Total understanding, pre-verbal, deeply intuitive. Streaming quality of gaze - reaches out and joins the other: "we are one." Gaze accesses "the truth" - "totally understand each other" - Window to the soul.
7. When I'm embarrassed I have to look away - then the other person won't notice how unsure I feel.	If we are not seen, we don't exist (Merleau-Ponty). Intentionality of gaze aversion in order to deny others access to our inner self. Gaze aversion as indicative of level of self-esteem.
8. I don't like people who can't "look me in the eye." They're usually chicken about their real feelings, and can't be up-front. It drives me crazy!	Gaze aversion in others evokes anger. Theorizing about gaze of others leads to projection. Gaze aversion "breaks the rules." Quality of gaze is powerful indicator to others of our inner state. Our E.C. (or lack of) is read by others.
9. The other day my teacher said "hi" to me in the hall - she really looked at me and smiled. Our eyes met just for a second, but it made me feel great for the whole morning.	Validation/invalidation of others. Confirming quality of gaze ("she <u>really</u> looked at me"). Immediacy of the phenomenon. Power of gaze as courier of affection: I exist, I am acknowledged, noticed, "worthy."
10. Sometimes people act like snobs - even strangers on the street. They give you no eye contact at all, and it's as if I must be invisible to them. This doesn't make me feel good. It's like I'm not worth their noticing me and that I don't exist.	Projection ("snobs"). Intentionality of gaze of others. We "need" E.C. from others to confirm our existence, our significance, attractiveness. Lack of E.C. is interpreted as making one feel "invisible" to others - that "I don't exist." Validation/invalidation. Power of gaze, gaze aversion.

11. When I was a bit younger (like 12 or 13) I didn't like being noticed and didn't like strangers looking at me. Now I kind of like it.	Rules of gaze. Not wanting to be noticed, but to blend in with the crowd. At this age, gaze aversion as an inverse type of confirmation (i.e. - "I'm o.k. I'm the same as everyone else, so it's good that strangers don't notice me"). However, we also need confirmation from others through E.C.
12. I can tell when my parents are mad at each other. They give each other "these looks" and think that no one else can tell that they're mad, but I can easily tell.	Gaze between others is "read" by observers - "easily tell." Observation of this mutual gaze reveals "the truth" - the window to the soul. Courier of affection/disapproval. Intentionality of gaze as silent message sender.
13. My Dad always gives us kids the evil eye when he's mad at us. Or I can tell he loves me or feels proud of me just by the way he looks at me sometimes.	Control/dominance/submission. Myth of "the evil eye" - part of our popular language. Validation/approval. Courier of affection. Messenger of "the truth" ("just by the way he looks at me..."). We need the gaze of others.
14. Once I tried staring at this guy I sort of liked more than I probably should. It freaked him out - it was weird.	Violation of unspoken rules regarding use of E.C. - unnerves others. Intentionality of gaze. Gaze as a powerful sexual initiator - throws out "the challenge." Rules of gaze may be different for males and females.

what I want;" "get it from others;" "they give no eye contact;" "my Dad gives us the evil eye when he's mad at us").

In L.'s data, the idea that gazing behaviour seems to have certain prescribed rules is also a recurrent theme (e.g., "Once I tried staring at this guy I sort of liked more than I probably should. It freaked him out . It was weird;" 14). She is aware that eye contact with others can send powerful messages, and that the rules for mutual gazing may be different for females than for males (i.e., "more than I probably should"). She senses that when she does "use" it, it is as if gaze can serve as a powerful weapon against which others are defenceless. L.'s data reminds us how the same theme emerges constantly in amatory literature and song (as in the "aggressive eye topos" described in Chapter 2).

She senses the mystical, almost primordial power of gaze and wonders, if in employing it to suit her purposes, she might be guilty of practicing a form of witchcraft (2). Here, images of the "evil eye " phenomenon come to mind. In one instance, she uses the term "evil eye" to describe her father's attempts at controlling her behaviour through gaze (13). The use of the term "evil eye" provides us with an example of how

the myth of the "evil eye" seems universal, and has over time become part of our colloquial language.

The primacy of visual perception is another theme revealed in several excerpts of L.'s diary (3, 4, 5, 12,). Mutual gaze can sometimes transcend and temporarily annul the significance of a dialogue. For example, she explains: "When being introduced to someone ... I have to make a great effort to listen and not just look;" 3). Concentrating on another's gaze can reflect not so much a concern with what the other is talking about, but with the search for the discovery of who they are as a person. Again, the theme that mutual gaze serves as one of the primary ways we seek information about our world is revealed in her data.

L. writes that "just a glance from someone can tell me what they think of me" (5). The phenomenon conveys messages that are often perceived by the receiver as being the "truth," and can initiate projective tendencies in the receiver (e.g., "If I'm feeling 'ugly', I think 'Oh no - that person thinks I'm ugly too' ... is that similar to being paranoid?" 5). L. understands how the gaze is "read," and theorizes about the possible meaning of gaze or gaze aversion in others (e.g., "I don't like people who can't look me in the eye. They're usually chicken about their real feelings,

and can't be up-front. It drives me crazy!" 8).

In experiencing intimate eye contact with her boyfriend, she encounters the fully co-constitutional aspects of the phenomenon (e.g., "It's like we are one;" 6). She touches upon the "streaming" quality of mutual gaze as a transphysical reaching out to the other, which provides an access, or "window to the soul." This she describes as the feeling that "we totally understand each other" (6).

L. shows she also has a strong sense of the power of gaze to validate or invalidate the existence of another (4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13). She remembered when "my teacher said 'hi' to me in the hall ... she <u>really</u> looked at me ... Our eyes met just for a second, but it made me feel great for the whole morning" (9). She too appears to measure gaze quantitatively, associating sustained gazing patterns with power and dominance (14), and gaze aversion with the need at times to be "invisible" to others (10), or as an indicator of low (7, 8) or high (4, 9) self-esteem.

Overall, one senses in L.'s protocol a keenly perceptive and intuitive awareness of the phenomenon that is interesting in a person of her relatively young age.

Interpretive Synthesis of Mark's Diary (Table 4)

Mark's diary appears to focus more on the "mechanical" aspects of mutual gaze than is evidenced in the other diaries. This suggests he is trying to grasp the structure of the phenomenon much in the same way that a scientist looking into a microscope attempts to understand what he sees (e.g., "Whenever I look at a friend I am reminded that I am seeing only a portion of the view ... You will never be able to look into both eyes at once;" 1). "Should equal time be given to looking at each eye during the course of a conversation?" 3). "How do you pass a stranger on a dark street?" 9). The reader has a sense of M.'s attempt to probe, in fine detail, the actual phenomenal structures or patterns of mutual gaze, as if, in so doing, its ineffable qualities will be revealed and understood. This interest in the more mechanical aspects of the phenomenon is repeated in numerous excerpts in his diary (1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 22).

It seems that M. would also like to experience eye contact on a deeper, more meaningful level than he feels is ordinarily possible. The idea that mutual gaze is too often superficial and meaningless is one of the most salient themes in his diary (5, 11, 12, 15, 17, 27, 28).

Table 4

Thematic Abstraction of Mark's Diary (Age 42)

Excerpts from Diary Notations	Central Themes as Revelatory of the Structure of Gaze
1. Whenever I look at a friend I am usually reminded that I cannot look at the person straight in the eyes and that I am seeing only a portion of the view... You will never be able to look into both eyes at once.	Eyes as objects (eye contact versus gaze). This aspect of vision (E.C.) is an empirically validated fact. M. begins his analysis by focusing on the mechanical aspects of perception.
2. As a child I was always told to look my parents straight in the eyes in order for them to discern if I was telling them the truth.	Control/dominance/submission. Eyes as gateway to "the truth." Information-seeking - others read our gaze to gain access to "the truth."
3. Which eye should be looked at most? The nearest one? Should equal time be given looking at each eye during the course of a conversation?	What are the rules of gaze? Eyes as mechanical objects. Awareness of this aspect of the phenomenon (non-mediating aspect of gaze - E.C. as a physiologically-based phenomenon).
4. A portrait artist may scan your face during conversation. The experience can be disarming if unprepared for rapidly wandering eyes - glances which bear no relationship to the drift of the conversation.	Rules of gaze are broken - M. senses two levels of looking going on - visual scanning of artist is "disarming" - M. cannot feel, in this case, the co-constitutional aspect of gaze.
5. Most face to face encounters I have with friends are, alas, little more than snap shot encounters. I recognize my friend and am in turn recognized. We exchange ideas. Subtle changes are disregarded unless significant to our conversation. How often do I leave a meeting with a friend - even a lengthy one, with the feeling of not having seen enough of the person.	Mechanicalness of looking ("alas"). "Eye-as-a-camera" model of perception? ("snap shot encounters"). Gaze can be superficial. In order for gaze to be co-constitutional, both observers have to be open - to permit access to their inner worlds. Validation through mutual gaze. M. misses this possibility for deeper communication with others that mutual gaze facilitates. Senses others are not as sensitive to the phenomenon as he is.

6. Whenever I look at a stranger it is to see only enough clues for dealing with the context in which we meet. Are the other's eyes friendly? Threatening? Bored? Is there a conflict between the expression in the eyes and the mouth? Do the eyes betray a smile which is false?	Information-seeking. "Reading" the gaze of others. Immediacy of knowledge through gaze - pre-reflective knowing. The eyes (gaze) as barometers of "the truth." Sensitive to the idea that there may be a discrepancy between the mediating gaze, and the other aspects of a person's facial expression (smile, etc.). Our eyes can "betray" us - they will tell "the truth" in spite of our attempts to mask it.
7. In business relationships my eye contact is not always used to the best of my advantage, especially with skilled negotiators. The departure from looking at the business adversary with a constant gaze too often signals a lack of preparation, being caught off-guard by an unexpected question.	Mutual gaze as highly intentional. We can "use" it to the "best of our advantage." Control/dominance/submission. Unspoken visual duels can take place through E.C. He who maintains gaze the longest is the victor, "top-dog." Indicative of self-esteem/lack of. Mutual gazing can be dangerous, risky, threatening. Looking away signals my weakness, my vulnerability, my ignorance.
8. Like most people I have developed skills with my eyes by trial and error.	Gaze is a skill we learn. Intentionality of the gaze.
9. How do you pass a stranger on a dark street in a questionable neighborhood? Hold your gaze on the eye furthest away until the tension of approaching builds. Shift to the nearest eye. Is the other still watching? Shift back to the far eye as you pass. Has the stranger been caught off-guard into believing your shifting eyes are glancing away? Is the stranger still watching? Why?	M. is very aware of the potency of the phenomenon. Intentionality of gaze. Prescribed rules vary according to different situations. M. is highly aware of the structure of the phenomenon. Again, a focus on the mechanical aspects of gaze. A game, a "dance" between strangers.

10. Looking into animal eyes arouses sensations from our primitive past. The ocelot recently captured stares out from its cage with all the wild fury that inspired Blake's "Tiger, Tiger." The leopard pacing in its narrow cell as it has for years stares blankly with the neurotic eye of defeat. The household cat stares briefly then shifts its gaze. What animal can outstare the human?

Gaze as physiologically arousing.
Jungian archetypes ("primitive past").
Mandala.
"the Evil Eye"?
Biological basis of gaze ("what animal can outstare the human?").

11. What I regret most about the human eye is that it is so much of a one-way street. Unlike the sense of touch which is a two-way form of communication, sight depends so much on the beholder.

Co-constitutionality of gaze can be broken if the beholder does not engage - the connection and meaning of gaze can be completely missed. This is sensed as a loss, "regret."

12. The twinkly eye, the sad glance, the furtive look are meaningless if the viewer chooses not to see. How often have I missed a message because a subtle signal from another's eyes was not perceived in time?

So much visual communication is missed, not "read" properly.
The viewer "chooses" not to see (intentionality of gaze).
Subtlety of gaze - "immediacy" - much is lost or missed - gaze is immediate, pre-reflective, instantaneous. We are often unable to receive the message "in time."

13. I recall encounters when the exchange of looks seemed more important than any other thing which happened, but they are few in number.

Primacy of gaze and visual interaction - overrides all other incoming information.
Yet this appears to M. as a relatively rare occurrence. Gaze is too often mechanical, too superficial for M.?)

14. R.C.M.P. or Customs Officials - the direct look into the eyes signals a peaceful and rational encounter. Yet Royalty can be disarmed (momentarily) by such a direct look since dropped eyes are to be expected.

Rules of gaze and eye contact.
Following the rules "signals a peaceful and rational encounter."
Breaking the rules can indicate insolence, a power struggle.
(Control/Dominance/Submission).

15. With the handicapped - twinkling eyes improved the exchange.

Gaze reaches out to others with warmth - streaming quality of E.C.
Validation of another's existence.
Intentionality of looking - "to improve the exchange."

16. Children (birth) - Maya's searching eyes for her mother, as she was crying out briefly in pain.

Eyes as primordial vehicles of the bonding process.
Profoundly moving, important.
An "innate template" in the human being? (Visual recognition of facial schemata).
Gaze of mother as comforting to the newborn infant.

17. Parents - tired eyes, unseeing eyes, viewing their adult children still as children.

Again, message of the glance or gaze can be missed, or "mis-read."
"Unseeing eyes" of parents, "tired eyes" view the world according to outmoded perameters.
A type of invalidation, though not deliberate.
Gaze as a habit - it is hard to change "the way we see the world."

18. Old friends - something to treasure from the past. Exchange of glances which trigger the mind's eye.

Co-constitutionality of gaze.
An exchange - a shared glance can recusitate old memories shared between friends.
"Window to the soul."

19. Mirror analysis - Who am I? I see my reflection and my own eyes.

Looking at our own gaze forces the question "Who am I?"
"Analysis" - we wish to discover our own inner self through looking into our eyes. Can we "see" into our own soul? Will this reveal our private, inner "truths" to ourselves?

20. Strangers - Reading their personalities in their eyes.

Information-seeking.
Gaze is "read" by strangers and reveals personality.
Immediacy of gaze.
Each of us reveals our personality through our gaze.

21. I wonder if I have been assessing my use of eye contact correctly? Am I giving away too much?

M. wonders if he's assessing his "use" of E.C. "correctly." (Prescribed rules)
Fears his analysis may be "giving away too much."
Access to the soul, the "truth" - can be perceived as threatening.

22. - curved eyes
- wooden eyes - totems
- plastic eyes
- glass eyes
- eye contact with the blind
- admonishing eyes - lowered eyes (guilt, defeat, submission)
- the editing eyes
- aged eyes - old Dr. Kearney's eyes

Eyes as mechanical objects.
Eyes as powerful, symbolic (the "Evil Eye" myth).
Unseeing eyes, yet highly symbolic, potently mysterious.
Power/control/dominance/submission.
Eyes who edit ("choose") what they will see.
Gaze in the very old can reflect our life experience - Wisdom is often sensed in the gaze of the elderly (or in deeply spiritual people?)

23. I think I know what is happening between two people if they are looking directly at each other. There seems to be a signal of increased awareness or communication. This is certainly true if they are in love or having an angry exchange. Empathy is easier.

E.C. as signal to engage the other in communication.
Arousal (physiological) aspect of gaze.
Intentionality.
Courier of affection/dislike.
Gaze releases a flow of psychic energy between people that opens door for communication - makes "empathy easier."
Transphysical luminosity of mutual gaze.

24. Most rewarding event is to look at my infant son. Here is communication through the eyes; beyond words.

Primordial aspect of gaze-bonding.
Intense, deep communication with infant son through gaze.
Primacy of visual perception.
This communication is so deep and intense, it appears to be "beyond words."

25. One of the problems with eye contact is that it distracts so completely from other things. The initial contact is often as arresting as a sneeze.

Gaze is disarming - primacy of perceptual vision is experienced as "distracting" - a "problem."
Immediacy of mutual gaze; so strong it is "as arresting as a sneeze."

26. At an Indian ceremony I found myself looking directly into the Old Sioux's eyes. He rocked his head back. My host informed me I had complicated the ceremony.

"Evil Eye" myth ("there are things that are not to be seen with the 'naked' eye") - Taboos.
Prescribed rules of gaze were broken.

27. My anatomy teacher taught me how to see. One should use one's eyes to discover form. The human eye cannot comprehend structure simply by looking at an object. With an understanding of structure the eye can "see" this within a form. How much of a structure of a person do I see when I look into their eyes?

Pedagogical implications.
We can be taught how to use our vision to discover form.
Learning to see better, more fully, to look not just mechanically, but with purpose to "dis-cover" and "un-cover" the essence (Intentionality).
We can see into another's structure in the same way (i.e. essence) - avenue to the soul is through the eyes.

28. Once when I returned to my small home town after having been away for years, I experienced a sensation of being invisible. I saw so many familiar faces.
- I stared at them straight in the eyes.
- Unseeing eyes briefly looked back. I knew so much about each person I passed. The experience was as though I was not there. I believed I had become invisible.

Being seen is not the same as being "seen."
Feels "invisible" when he is not recognized (validation/invalidation).
Information-seeking ("Will I be recognized?")
"unseeing eyes" - Co-constitutional aspect of gaze is not present.
Being observed by others "as if we were merely insects" makes us feel "invisible" - as if we don't exist (Merleau-Ponty).

29. I also had a tremendous sensation of power.

M. experiences his role as the stranger as very powerful.
Mysterious power of the phenomenon.
Anonymity allows M. to feel in control, in a position of dominance ("I see them, they cannot see me.")
Describes this feeling as a "tremendous sensation of power."

For example, he reports: "Most face to face encounters I have with friends are, alas, little more than snap-shot encounters ... Subtle changes are disregarded unless significant to our conversation" (5). He regrets that this can leave him with the feeling of "not having seen enough of the person" (5).

M. understands the essentially co-constitutional nature of mutual gaze and the communicative functions it serves. The deeper level of encounter he seeks is partially dependent upon the other picking up certain cues that can facilitate the release of the flow of energy (the "streaming,"or the "fire") that will provide him with the opportunity for mutual validation he sees as always potentially present in the process of mutual gaze - a potential that he regrets is most often "missed." For example, he explains that: "What I regret most about the human eye is that it is so much of a one-way street. Unlike the sense of touch, which is a two-way form of communication, sight depends so much on the beholder" (11). And again he notes: "The twinkly eye, the sad glance, the furtive look are meaningless if the viewer chooses not to see. How often have I missed a message because a subtle signal from another's eyes was not perceived in time?" (12) His data helps to show

us how one can "choose" not to see, and often one cannot see "in time" what one should.

As seen in the other diaries, M. shows an interest in identifying the various rules associated with mutual gaze (3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 14, 21, 27). He wonders "if I have been assessing my use of eye contact correctly? Am I giving away too much?" (21). The breaking of the "rules" can be experienced as openly censurial, (e.g., when M. is informed that by looking directly into the old Indian Chief's eyes, he had behaved inappropriately and thereby "complicated the ceremony" (26). The "rules" may also be applied in more subtle ways, as is seen in his careful analysis of how mutual gaze is experienced as two strangers pass by one another on a street (6, 9). The prescribed rules may vary according to the intentionality of the participants, and can be seen as having the attributes of a "game" where we can learn to use certain rules to our advantage. For example, in a business context M. says "my eye contact is not always used to the best of my advantage," and this leaves him vulnerable to "being caught off-guard by an unexpected question" (7).

Another powerful theme that appears in M.'s diary is that of the primacy of visual perception. Numerous excerpts refer to the idea that vision is pre-eminent

amongst the senses (13, 16, 24, 25,). For example, he recalls "encounters when the exchange of looks seemed more important than any other thing which happened" (13), and: "One of the problems with eye contact is that it distracts so completely from other things. The initial contact is often as arresting as a sneeze" (25). M.'s data indicate that he too is familiar with the phenomenon's directness, or "immediacy."

M. is also keenly aware of the sensations of physiological arousal that mutual gazing can evoke (10, 23), and twice refers to the idea that mutual gaze is not only arousing to humans, but to other animals: "Looking into animal eyes arouses sensations from our primitive past ... what animal can outstare the human?" (10) He seems to be saying that there is an aspect of mutual gaze that can bring us in touch with certain archetypal or primordial roots - almost as if life itself receives a kind of acknowledgement through the gaze - animal to animal. animal to man, and man to man. Other archetypal images reminiscent of various ancient and symbolic taboos, such as the "evil eye" myth appear in M.'s data (10, 22, 26). He refers to such images as "wooden eyes," "totems," "admonishing eyes," "editing eyes," "plastic eyes," and "glass eyes" (22). These descriptive phrases suggest the metaphorical and

symbolic visual images associated with the animating spirit or soul, as well as the power of gaze to indicate mood or character.

M. relates how he was moved when he experienced the initial contact of mutual gazing between his newborn daughter and his wife. He witnessed the phenomenon of mother-infant bonding that is thought to occur almost immediately after birth (e.g.,"Maya's searching eyes for her mother as she was crying out briefly in pain;" 16). He also describes how moved he feels when he experiences deep and close eye contact with his infant son (e.g., "The most rewarding event is to look at my infant son. Here is communication through the eyes; beyond words" (24).

Interpretive Synthesis of Wendy's Diary (Table 5)

Wendy's description is different in that she concentrates, to a significant extent, on the lack of eye contact she receives from others (1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 16). She ruminates about what this perceived lack means in terms of the quality of her closest relationships (her husband, her son). This perceived lack of validation through mutual gaze appears to be the most dominant theme in W.'s diary. In speaking of her husband, she says: "If he has not looked at me when I am speaking, I feel invalidated, rejected, unimportant,

Table 5

Thematic Abstraction of Wendy's Diary (Age 42)

Excerpts from Diary Notations	Central Themes as Revelatory of the Strucure of Gaze
1. Eye contact - or lack of it.	W. starts by focusing on the lack of E.C. (This phrase is repeated again).
2. Observation in a restaurant: Subject conversing about an observation he made during the day. While speaking, he did not look at me - only brief glances - his eyes moved to different points - looking over my shoulder - over my head - moved to other people - looked down.	Breaking the rules of gaze behaviour. Duration of glances - "only brief" - quantifying amount of E.C. - brief glances sensed as disconfirming. Note point of view of writer - distancing herself - somewhat detached - very analytical - a good observer.
3. My reaction - I found that it was difficult to pay attention to what he was saying. Although he was speaking to me, I did not feel he was attending to me. It seemed he was more interested in something going on behind me. Or possibly, on some level, he was afraid of my disapproval.	Lack of gaze or E.C. from partner inhibits other senses (hearing). Primacy of perceptual vision. Information-seeking - Instinctively she wonders about the lack of connection as perceived through the minimal gaze of her partner - wonders what it means. (Gaze as message sender). Invalidation ("not attending to me"). Projection - reading messages from the gaze of others as to what they may be feeling or thinking: e.g. "he was afraid of my disapproval."
4. Eye contact - or lack of it. - Difficulty in conversing with someone who does not look at me when I'm speaking. - If he does not respond, as well as not looking at me - I am given the impression he has not heard. - Thus I repeat what was said (or the question) which often receives an angry response - that he has not heard.	Repetition of phrase #1 - this is an important matter for W. Co-constitutionality is the essence of mutual gaze - we cannot fully communicate (speak) to someone who will not engage visually. Connection is impeded, almost severed. N.B. repetition: "he has not heard."

5. If they (he) has not looked at me when I am speaking, I feel invalidated, rejected, unimportant, unacknowledged - which may be the intention of the person I spoke to.	Validation/invalidation. Intentionality of gaze. Projection ("may be the intention").
6. Net result - I stop speaking - I am left with the definite impression that the other person is not interested in what I have to say (my husband, my son).	Gaze (or lack of), as messenger of "the truth" (i.e., "definite impression"). Validation/invalidation of the other. W. seems to accept the pattern of E.C. established between her and her husband and son.
7. Often this may reflect fatigue on the part of the other person, or that he would prefer to be left alone to watch his game without interruption - however, it happens so often - that the net result is that I leave the room - which does indeed leave him alone.	Projection - message is interpreted and acted upon (W. withdraws). W. feels shut out - denial of gaze is sensed as intentional. She responds by withdrawing from the possibility of further rejection.
8. Ends up being quite serious - when you've made the effort and he doesn't want to acknowledge you, it becomes a major problem.	Amount of mutual gaze is seen as a barometer of the state of W.'s relationship with her husband. Gaze as quantitatively measured. Perhaps W.'s husband "uses" gaze denial as a form of punishment? Gaze reaches out to others - denial of reciprocal gaze is experienced as "a major problem."
9. Eye contact between friends: In this case eye contact during conversation is frequently sustained and in conjunction with appropriate facial expression - conveys the sense of being heard and understood - of being cared for.	Gaze as validating, confirming. Mutual gaze now is experienced as co-constitutional. Gaze has rules ("appropriate facial expression") - E.C. - Message sender.
10. In this type of give and take conversation, the listener tends to maintain more constant eye contact and watches the speaker, searching facial expressions and gestures.	Gaze is information-seeking. Gaze is intentional. W. notes carefully the mechanics of gaze.

11. The speaker's eyes move around more - returning frequently to check the listener's expression and response.	This aspect of gaze has been supported in experimental studies. Mechanics of gaze - W. analyzes the phenomenon carefully, meticulously.
12. This type of conversation is mutual - it is sharing of experience - a sharing of information and emotion - which is highly valued by both parties.	Co-constitutionality of gaze. Streaming quality when gaze is mutual and empathic. Validation, courier of affection.
13. Another type of eye contact which I do not like is the cold, hard stare of intimidation, which can vary in length, but is terminated only when the other party looks away (backs down).	Gaze establishes control, dominance, submission of others. Quantitatively measured. Power of the phenomenon to control or dominate others. Signal for aggression (one outstares the other to establish dominance) - as seen in the animal kingdom. Highly threatening - arousing. Intentionality of gaze. Gaze has its own unique character (i.e., "cold, hard stare").
14. This look conveys a sense of threat and is meant to silence the other person and establish dominance. It is usually accompanied by silence and threatening body posture. The intimidating person is usually drawn to full height and looking down at the other person.	Gaze is powerfully used to control others. Intentionality. Mechanics of gaze - body posture and silence accompany distinct messages from the sender. Indicative of self-esteem/lack of.
15. In competitive sports men often intentionally use this stare and posture to intimidate and warn their opponents. It's all part of the game.	Intentionality again. "Part of the game" - ie. one that has prescribed rules and conventions. W. analyzes the mechanics of mutual gaze carefully. Body posture plus E.C. equals total effect wanted. Gaze is read on a number of levels - a message-sender.

16. In a family context such intimidation may be more damaging. It engenders anger, frustration, humiliation, sometimes defiance in the receiver. In this family defiance is always punished.

Gaze can hurt, cause pain, "be damaging."
Intimidating gaze lowers self-esteem of others.
Power of the phenomenon.
A war can be waged silently through gaze.
Highly arousing.

17. Distancing - in writing I have to make a concerted effort to own what I am saying. - I wrote this as a receiver rather than how I would use eye contact.

W. feels difficulty of personalizing her experience with the phenomenon.
She distances herself from her observations.
Writes from the point of view of an observer - Why?
W. senses that E.C. is something that we "use" against others to control or to manipulate others.

18. I wouldn't intentionally shut people out by not giving eye contact - I don't use it in the negative sense, as H. does.

W. senses how intentional gaze is.
Repeat of word "use."
Validation/invalidation - "shut people out."
We "give" eye contact - or we don't.

19. It can be damaging in terms of male-female relationships. Our whole culture encourages men to develop that skill - ie., to use it for intimidation, dominance in athletics and business.

Cultural aspects of gaze.
Intentionality - "use it" for dominance (males over females).
Gaze is a skill that can be taught, developed.

20. Women are taught to avert that at all costs. It's extremely hostile, for a woman to give a man a look like that - it could be physically dangerous because it's so hostile and intimidating.

Different rules for men and women.
"Extremely hostile," "physically dangerous," "intimidating," "avert at all costs" i.e. power of the phenomenon.
Control/dominance/submission.
Intentionality of gazing behaviour.

21. I don't think women use eye contact in that way - we are taught to look away or back down.

Rules - "we are taught."
Men "use" E.C. "in that way" - intentionality.
Gaze aversion is more typically female for W.
Women are more inclined to "look away" - which means to "back down" in encounters with men.

unacknowledged - which may be the intention of the person I spoke to" (5). W. senses that the denial of communicative, truly "co-constitutional" gaze is intentional - a deliberate way in which her husband or son can choose to shut her out, thereby denying her confirmation as an existing being. Her reaction is one of hurt and confusion (e.g.,"I found it difficult to pay attention to what he was saying;" 3). She feels that - without eye contact, she "has not been heard" (4).

Wendy's data echoes the theme that mutual gaze serves an important function in validating or invalidating the existence of others. One senses a feeling of loss, anger, and regret in her data. Her existence and importance as a person who needs to be heard and understood has been seriously undermined by being denied the affirmation one feels when one senses one is being "truly" seen. She wonders if the lack of eye contact from her husband indicates that "possibly, on some level, he was afraid of my disapproval" (3). W. then describes how this "ends up being quite serious - when you've made the effort and he doesn't want to acknowledge you, it becomes a major problem" (8).

In contrast, W. describes how eye contact between friends is a completely different experience: "In this

case, eye contact during conversation is frequently sustained and in conjunction with an appropriate facial expression" (9), and this "conveys the sense of being heard and understood - of being cared for" (9). Now mutual gaze is experienced as validating, confirming, and fully co-constitutional. The "rules" are in place ("appropriate facial expression"), and the conversation is now truly mutual. She comments: "It is a sharing of experience - a sharing of information and emotion which is highly valued by both parties" (12).

As in Mark's data, W. also appears to be interested in looking at and analyzing some of the "mechanical" aspects of the structure of the phenomenon. For example, she describes in detail where and how gaze moves and shifts during conversations (2, 9, 10, 11, 13). W. has experienced how the gaze can be used to control and dominate others: "Another type of eye contact which I do not like is the cold hard stare of intimidation, which can vary in length, but is terminated only when the other party looks away or backs down" (13). She is also sensitive to the fact that this kind of a stare is "usually accompanied by silence and a threatening body posture", and that the stare is often intentionally used by men in competitive sports "to intimidate and warn their opponents. It's all part of

the game" (15). As is apparent in the other diaries, W. is also aware that gazing behaviour operates under quite clearly prescribed rules and conventions (2, 9, 10, 15, 19, 21).

She points out that these rules may be different for women than they are for men. While men are encouraged to develop an "intimidating" gaze which can serve as a useful asset in business and athletics, W. says that in our culture "women are taught to avert that at all costs. It's extremely hostile for a woman to give a man a look like that - it could be physically dangerous because it's so hostile and intimidating" (20). Her descriptions give credence to the fact that mutual gaze invokes physiological arousal and that, in the animal kingdom, gaze is a signal for aggression.

In summary, the central themes characterizing W.'s experience with the phenomenon are that mutual gaze has the power to validate or invalidate one's sense of being; it is, by nature, used in a highly intentional fashion; one tends to project one's own meaning onto the gaze (or lack of gaze) of others; gaze has rules which are culturally and biologically determined; and, the quality and style of one's gaze can vary considerably, depending on the level of perceived self-esteem during

specific encounters with others.

Integrative Reflection: The Structure of Mutual Gaze

Upon completing the systematic analysis of the five diaries, several themes regarding the structure of the phenomenon of mutual gaze emerged from the idiosyncratic experiences in the protocols. These major, or "essential" themes are described as follows:

1. Primacy of Perceptual Vision. The data appear to support Merleau-Ponty's (1964) idea that visual perception constitutes the ground in which all "higher" mental phenomena (e.g., remembering, reasoning, analyzing) have their roots. Visual perception appears to be capable of overriding all other sensory information, should any of it conflict with the visual sense, giving support to Plato's claim that vision is predominant amongst the senses.

The most fundamental and primary mode of interpersonal encounter is the interaction between two pairs of eyes and the energy that is mediated by this interaction. For it is mainly here, in reciprocal gazing, that people actually "meet", (in the strict sense). Most of the diaries revealed an awareness of this aspect of the phenomenon. All co-researchers spoke of the power of mutual gaze to transmit meaning in a

direct and immediate manner. The expression in the eyes was shown to be capable of revealing a "truth" to the observer. This truth was sometimes seen to be in conflict with other aspects of facial expression. For example, Mark's diary described that the expression in the eyes provide the most salient and reliable cues through which we can gain access to this truth: "Is there a conflict between the expression in the eyes and the mouth? Do the eyes betray a smile which is false?" (Table 4, #6). The expression in the gaze, then, represents the predominant sensory cue to which we respond in our search for meaning.

2. Information-Seeking. Mutual gazing is an information-seeking process. The world around is infused with perceptual meaning. It is a seen world where the perceiver is involved behaviourally, emotionally, and interpersonally in a quest for meaning. Visual perception can be thought of as a silent dialectical process in which one is constantly attempting to intuit the link between inner and outer experience. McConville (1978) realized that "the starting point for perceptual psychology is the experiential fact that the visual world makes sense" (p.95). The data in the present study suggest that the way in which one sees and seeks to understand what one

sees is fundamentally and necessarily a uniquely individual phenomenon. The descriptions point to the idea that the visual perceptual process clearly involves more than simply experiencing the sensory events which produce basic raw sensations. Mutual gaze, a process whereby one seeks to gather information from another, permits one to anticipate experience to a certain extent.

Eye contact, or mutual gaze provides us with a quick and precise way to get feedback on how one is doing in interpersonal interactions. Most co-researchers spoke of the "immediacy" of eye contact - how in split seconds they could get information that was direct, clear, and "unmistakable." One looks at another because one needs to know about the other's intentions. How is my speech being received by this audience? How are these students responding to my lecture? Why is my friend giving me "the evil eye"? Why does my son or daughter refuse to look me in the eye? One scans the environment searching for the expression (i.e., the message) in the eyes of others in order to get this kind of immediate information. A single glance can give us remarkably fast readings of a situation.

3. Intentionality. That mutual gaze is characterized by a strong element of intentionality is one of the most

consistent themes emerging from the protocols. All co-researchers revealed that they sensed mutual gaze is highly intentional by nature, as though it was a powerful "tool" which one can learn to use and manipulate to one's advantage. The ways in which people can use eye contact and mutual gaze to gain something (such as power over others), or to punish others (e.g.,by denying eye contact) is frequently referred to in the diaries.

As stated previously, the word "intentional" can be interpreted on two levels. According to phenomenologists, Husserl's (1948) assertion that consciousness is always consciousness of something implies that establishing eye contact with others is often purposeful, and not random. Phenomenologists maintain that all human behaviour is meaningful action directed towards the world. It is a relation between man and the world, and neither can be defined independently of the other (co-constitutionality).

McConville (1978) stated that: "vision is not a pure, virginal searchlight blindly illuminating whatever happens to stand before it" (p.111). This idea of vision was essentially the the same as the Aristotelian concept of vision described in chapter 2, which the data from this study do not appear to support. Rather, the

gaze is itself behavioural, expressing the perceiver's behavioural engagement of the world at any given time. It is this writer's opinion that the theme of intentionality that emerges so strongly in this data constitutes that "third force" element of vision that Ebreo identified over three hundred years ago, in his attempt to reconcile the Platonic and Aristotelian theories of vision.

In this study, eye contact reveals itself to be intentional in the more common sense of the word as well. One "makes" eye contact with someone, and "sees through" someone's lies. One beholds, contemplates, discerns, gazes, inspects, scans, stares, surveys, examines, looks, and "per-ceives." These verbs all imply intentionality on the part of the observer. Each word has come into existence to attempt to describe and explain the complexity, variety, and deliberateness found in the ways one uses one's eyes. One co-researcher said "I use it a lot in counselling. I look straight into people's eyes and keep the focus directed so they don't go off the topic" (Table 1 #8, 9). A daughter "used" it by denying her mother eye contact as a way of "shutting her out," to show anger. Grant (Table 2) described the phenomenon by frequently using such expressions as "use it", "give it", "break

it" - words that again serve to evoke the purposeful and deliberate aspects of gaze. It is as if one learns to "use" the phenomenon as a highly manipulative instrument for communication.

In constant use, the awareness that one's gazing behaviour is intentional appears to vary between being highly conscious of the manipulative power of the gaze, to being quite unconscious of how gaze can affect others. For example, it is unlikely that the professor described in the Introduction was aware of the fact that he had hurt a student by denying her direct visual engagement when responding to her question. At other times, the data reveal that people are often quite aware how potent a "weapon" it can be (e.g., "Sometimes I've used it fairly successfully just to challenge and see if I can score;" Table 3, #2)

The phenomenological writers outlined in Chapter Two focused considerable attention on the intentional aspects of the phenomenon, an aspect that seems strongly supported in the data.

4. Validating/Invalidating the Existence of Another. In each of the five diaries, the idea that mutual gaze or denial of mutual gaze to others had a powerful emotional effect was another predominant theme. This was characteristically expressed as eye contact having the

potential for validating or invalidating others, particularly in the area of self-esteem. It appears that one may have a need to be seen by others. In seeing and being seen by others, one may receive confirmation of one's existence and that one "matters." Eye contact, or gaze denial was consistently described as having this kind of validating or invalidating power (e.g., "Just a glance can tell me what they think of me. Even strangers on the street, if they give you no eye contact, it's like I'm not worth their noticing me and that I don't exist;" Table 3, #5,#10).

Interestingly, the amount of eye contact (length of gaze, intensity of gaze, frequency of gaze aversion etc.) was perceived by the co-researchers as a reliable indicator of a person's level of self-esteem. Often, the data appeared to suggest that the amount of eye contact was subtly quantified or "measured" by the co-researchers in an effort to ascertain how their levels of self-esteem might compare with others. Not surprisingly, one's sense of self-esteem appears to be dependent, to a significant extent, on the feedback we receive from others. This feedback is often visual in nature. The ability to initiate and to sustain eye contact was described as being an indicator of how one feels about oneself in various interpersonal encounters.

One co-researcher felt that "giving" more than the other person helped her to feel more "in control" (Table 3, #17).

The data suggest that people who engage in a deliberate amount of sustained eye contact seem to be judged by others as more self-confident, natural and sincere. This finding has been confirmed by some of the experimental studies described earlier. With direct eye contact, the witnessing of emotions becomes a reciprocal event, and an affective bond may be confirmed. When one looks away, or breaks eye contact frequently, it may indicate a desire to maintain psychological distance and to avoid receiving or sending messages that are emotional or threatening. This was most poignantly illustrated in Wendy's diary, where her experience of invalidation through gaze denial was a consistently powerful theme.

5. Rules. All five protocols revealed a concern with the idea that mutual gazing is a form of human communication that seems to be guided by certain rules, or conventions. When these "rules" are adhered to, one can engage with others, anticipate outcomes, and feel a degree of security in knowing this. When, however, the co-researchers perceived these rules as being broken,

they experienced feelings of confusion, invalidation, anger, and threat. Rosalind felt "confused" yet "flattered" when she received eye contact from a professor - eye contact which she felt "rightfully" belonged to someone else. In another classroom situation, she saw "fair" and equitable allocation of eye contact as an important way in which the teacher made all the students feel included (i.e., validated).

Grant's protocol reveals that the prescribed rules for gazing behaviour can be likened to a "game", a kind of visual duel in which the two observers are engaged in a mute struggle for dominance or power. ("When I looked at him, he'd look away from me ... he would look furtively away whenever I caught his eye. It was like a kind of game;" Table 2 #1). Mark's diary also showed preoccupation with the gamesmanship of mutual gaze, describing business colleagues as "adversaries" who were "skilled negotiators" in a game for which he did not always feel adequately prepared to compete "to the best of his advantage;" (Table 4, #7).

Wendy experienced the breaking of the rules as confusing, hurtful, and invalidating, as evidenced in a restaurant experience where her partner engaged in only the most minimal and perfunctory amount of eye contact

with her. On another occasion, when eye contact was "frequently established", and was accompanied by the "appropriate facial expression", she felt the rules were maintained, and hence felt "understood" and "cared for;" (Table 5, #9). Wendy also pointed out that the rules for gazing behaviour seem to be different for men and women, which suggests that there is a cultural component to gaze and that it may be partly a learned phenomenon. She suggests that men are taught to use sustained gaze "for intimidation, dominance, and skill in athletics", while women are taught "to avert that at all costs;" (Table 5, #20).

Having been taught it is "extremely inappropriate" for a woman to "give a man a look like that", Wendy felt that to break these rules could quite literally be physically dangerous "because it's so hostile and intimidating;" (Table 5, #20). Behind these culturally prescribed rules, however, it is tempting to speculate that there may be a direct link to our primeval animal origins involved in reciprocal gaze, given that gaze is primarily a signal for aggression and a struggle for dominance in the animal kingdom.

Mark and Wendy's diaries give considerable attention to describing and analyzing what might be called the more mechanical configurations of mutual gaze. Mark

comments: "You will never be able to look into both eyes at once." "Which eye should be looked at most?" "How do you pass a stranger on a dark night in a questionable neighborhood?" (Table 4, #3,#9).) His use of such words as "should" and "how" underscores the concept that mutual gaze is a distinct phenomenal event, having a structure that is defined by clearly identifiable rules. Wendy too is fascinated by the more mechanical components of mutual gaze, and is meticulous in her approach to grasping this aspect of the phenomenon (e.g.,"The speaker's eyes move around more - returning frequently to check the listener's expression and response;" (Table 5, #11).)

6. Couriers of Affection: Eye Contact as a Sexual Initiator. Mutual gaze appears to play a pivotal role in amorous behaviour. The theme that eye contact serves a vital function as a potent stimulus in "the mating game," or, more poetically, as a messenger and inspirer of love is consistently found in the protocols. Rosalind, Leslie, Mark, and Grant speak of the power of the phenomenon to transmit sexual interest, intimacy, or love. Wendy describes how she perceives the lack of reciprocal gaze as a painful metaphor for the lack of affection and intimacy she senses in her closest relationships.

A person's decision to engage in mutual gaze is one of the principal signals by which s/he denotes a willingness to begin an encounter, for ocular engagement reflects human engagement. "Catching someone's eye" indicates the inception of a possible relationship and may be consciously manipulated towards this end. Most of the co-researchers appear extremely aware of this aspect of the phenomenon, and the protocols consistently reveal the role eye contact can play in flirtation and communicating sexual interest. Inasmuch as looking can have its own passionate energy, erotic desires can speak through the gaze. Here the gaze may provide an open window to inner sexual latency, frankly showing the "way in" to states of desire. A person may be deliberately using the gaze to refract the light of desire, just as Plato suggested in his efflux theory of vision, and which one encounters in the concept of the "aggressive eye topos" of amatory literature and song throughout the ages.

7. Primordial Archetypes. Interestingly, in only one of the protocols is this theme clearly evident. Most of the other co-researchers, though not specifically referring to symbolic eye images, do emphasize the ineffable and mystical power they sense in the phenomenon. Mark's diary reveals an awareness of the

primordial, archetypal themes that are generally felt to be universally apprehended. His references to images of the "evil eye", eyes on totem poles, the primordial sensations associated with looking into animals' eyes, and the various taboos against directly gazing into the eyes of Indian chiefs and royalty, attest to an awareness of these archetypal themes. The profound sensation he experiences when gazing deeply into the eyes of his infant son points towards a sensitivity to the deeply symbolic, archetypal hallmarks associated with the phenomenon.

8. Reading the Gaze. Related to the theme that vision is an essentially information-seeking process is another emergent theme I shall refer to as the "reading" of the gaze. Mutual gaze, as with all visual processes, seems to involve a process of perceptual reading that is at the very core of the phenomenon. As a perceptual reader, one attempts to grasp the meaning of a look, and one does this in an immediate, pre-reflective manner that is, as Heron (1985) describes it, "prior to all explicit predication" (p. 244). For example, Mark comments: "Whenever I look at a stranger it is to see only enough clues for dealing with the context in which we meet," (Table 4, #6) and, "Strangers - reading their personalities in their eyes" (Table 4, #20). The

messages mediated through the gaze are perceived instantaneously, and are "read", or interpreted as "the truth". Rosalind highlights this with the comment: "His eye contact sent me a loud and clear message. There was no mistaking his message...it was so immediate it almost knocked me off my feet;" (Table 1, #3).

At other times, there is more subtlety involved in reading the gaze. Sometimes the messages are not so clear and may be open to a number of possible interpretations. Mark, Grant, Rosalind, and Leslie all express apprehension that mutual gaze might be mis-read. Grant writes: "Often I wonder how it's being read - if it's being misinterpreted" (Table 2, #7). Mark feels a sense of loss or regret at how much visual communication is missed or not "read properly." Because eye contact is so subtle and silent a phenomenon, one is "often unable to receive the message in time" (Table 4, #12).

The special knowledge involved in the reading of a look is related to the intentionality of both observers. Whether or not one feels "fully understood" is, to a significant extent, dependent upon the intuitive skills, the level of sensitivity, and the degree of reciprocity and intimacy experienced by both during an encounter. Often one might misconstrue or miss the essence of what another's gaze is mediating. As Mark puts it: "The

twinkly eye, the sad glance, the furtive look are meaningless if the viewer chooses not to see. How often have I missed a message because a subtle signal from another's eyes was not perceived in time?" (Table 4, #12)

The fact that in the hectic and frequently superficial rush of everyday life, such comprehension is for most of us barely noticeable, is obscured by categorical preconceptions, or by language, is merely a function of our relatively undeveloped state of sensitivity to the phenomenon.

9. Projection. Associated with the theme of reading the gaze, and its possible "mis-reading", the diaries reveal a marked tendency on the part of some of the co-researchers to project onto others what they feel others might be thinking during the process of mutual gaze. This tendency towards projection has been well-supported in experimental studies (e.g., Argyle & Cook, 1976), and is also seen as a predominant theme in the "evil eye" mythology referred to in Chapter Two. Leslie wonders if she is being "paranoid" when she says: "If, however I'm feeling ugly, I think 'Oh no - that person thinks I'm ugly too' - just a glance from someone can tell me what they think of me" (Table 3, #5). Grant said "He seemed insecure, as if my looking at him was

threatening" (Table 2, #2). Rosalind was sure that "The other girl must have felt so humiliated" (Table 1, #4). Wendy speculated that "on some level, he was afraid of my disapproval" (Table 5, #3).

10. Window to theSoul. The most powerful theme that emerged when working through the analysis of this data can best be described as one of a sensation of profound intimacy. I felt I was, in a wholly unique way, permitted access to the innermost spirit, or the "souls" of the co-researchers who participated in the quest to reveal the essence of this phenomenon. Eye contact, or mutual gaze seems to be one of the most intimate and direct means of communication that one can experience. The diaries all reveal that the co-researchers are deeply aware of the power of gaze to transmit our innermost thoughts, fears, and desires.

Eye contact, in and of itself, however does not guarantee that one will "automatically" experience the eyes as "the window to the soul." What seems to be essential for mutual gaze to be experienced as intimate, is related to the concept of co-constitutionality discussed earlier, Buber's idea of the "streaming human glance", and Heron's description of the "transphysical luminosity" of the gaze. These phrases represent attempts to capture linguistically the essence of the

phenomenon and address the idea that under optimal conditions of mutual gaze, we are filled out and "irradiated" by a powerful, yet subtle form of energy that represents a unique phenomenal component of the gaze. To be complete, then, eye contact must not be experienced unilaterally, but transactionally. Even if one directs one's glance to another's eyes in the attempt to establish "contact", one's gaze would not truly reach through to the other if the other is not open and receptive. For example, if the receiver's attention is focused upon self-reflection, the receiver would be unaware of the other's attempts at establishing visual communication. S/he would feel nothing.

However, when deep and sustained eye contact <u>is</u> complete and reciprocal, both persons seem to experience, immediately and simultaneously, a beam of warmth from each other. This is the energy or "fire" that Plato sought to describe in his efflux theory of vision, and the paramount theme that appears so compellingly in the protocols. Mark feels that the avenue to the soul is through the eyes. He says "Strangers - reading their personalities in their eyes" (Table 4, #20). Gazing into the eyes of his infant son is experienced as "the most rewarding event - a communication beyond words" (Table 4, #24). Leslie

writes: "There is nothing greater than really making close eye contact with someone you're involved with. It's like we are one" (Table 3, #6). Yet at other times she feels the need to close off the access to her true feelings by minimizing eye contact (e.g.,"When I'm embarrassed I have to look away - then the other person won't notice how unsure I feel" (Table 3, #7).

Rosalind relates how "the first thing I look at is the eyes; they tell more than anything else." "My hairdresser said to me the other day, 'You look like you've been having an affair. I can see it in your eyes.'" (Table 1, #19). Repeatedly, the data reveals this intimate aspect of the gaze and how powerful a vehicle it seems to be in permitting others to gain access to our innermost thoughts, or our "souls."

Love and hate provide paradigm instances of the emotional power of mutual gaze. Hate is one of the most unsettling reminders of the direct and mediating aspect of the gaze. As Heron (1985) states:

> The gaze of him who hates may become consumed by a discharge of corrosive and destructive light. These shooting arrow-lights of hate are familiar enough. By contrast, in the case of love, one may speak of the luminous

> embrace of the gaze, the way it encompasses and surrounds the other with delight (p.259).

The gaze then, is a bearer of meaning which is taken up by the whole of a look, and it seems that, to a certain extent, one can control whether or not one will or will not reveal one's psychical state to others. As Grant so sensitively explains: "One of the hardest things for her is to reveal herself. She feels she loses some of herself when we become intimate and too close. This shows in her eye contact ... The sum total is that it can only go as deep as you're both willing to go with it" (Table 2, #16,#17).

Conclusion

The ten major themes described above were those that consistently emerged from the data analysis as essential components of the phenomenon of mutual gaze. Although most of the ten themes were evident in all the protocols, as might be expected, some themes were more pronounced in some protocols than others. I felt fortunate in receiving data that seemed to be unusually rich and evocative. This offered me the possibility for a deep engagement with the phenomenon. To a significant extent, I feel the data "speaks for itself" most

effectively, and represents fascinating reading as it is. This underscored the validity of the concern that phenomenological researchers share regarding subject selection, and the importance of finding co-researchers who are most suited and able to elucidate the phenomenon. My primary function in the research process was to provide a methodological framework by which a deeper analysis and integrative synthesis could be accomplished.

This study sought, by means of a systematic phenomenological method, to gain a more holistic understanding of what happens when people meet each other through visual contact. The eyes are not merely mechanical components of our physiological anatomy, for the eyes not only see but express emotion. The expression of emotion is quite likely the most important communication we receive from others, and yet the data in this study seem to suggest that we are often unaware of the unique capacity that body language in general, and gaze in particular can offer in understanding and facilitating interpersonal communication.

The human science approach to research often finds itself in the position of having to struggle for acknowledgement and legitimacy as a science. One of the

most important ways human science researchers have in furthering this end, is to demonstrate the power of this method as a practical and useful science - one that is not confined to philosophical and subjective abstractions. The present study sought to reveal those aspects of mutual gaze that are sensed, but not articulated, intuited, yet not fully elucidated. In seeking to deepen and broaden our understanding of such phenomena as mutual gaze, we can increase our intuitive and communicative skills. This is important in all human encounters, but more specifically, carries special significance for those in the teaching, helping, or business professions. These practical implications will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER VI

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Final Comments on the Method

The phenomenon of eye contact, or the lived-experience of mutual gaze as described in this study is a challenging one for a researcher to investigate, since it is essentially an abstract, silent, and pre-reflective phenomenon. The experience of mutual gaze dwells in the human realm of the spiritual and the metaphysical, yet remains inextricably linked to our most primitive animal origins. The phenomenological expression which refers to the "slipperiness" of a phenomenon is a particularly appropriate way of describing the difficulties associated with accessing the structural components of mutual gaze. Capturing and elucidating these essences, or themes, becomes intuitively and linguistically a challenging task.

Merleau-Ponty (1962), in seeking to describe the complex nature of visual perception, has probably provided the most detailed descriptive analysis to date of how we "per-ceive" - how we intentionally go out to meet the world of others through the channel of vision.

We are not, it would appear, merely the blank slate upon which are inscribed impressions, as Aristotle and the logical empiricists would affirm. Reciprocal vision seems to involve a great deal more. It is the opinion of this researcher that the data in this study offer persuasive support for the ideas of Plato, Ebreo, Zukav, and the phenomenological philosophers' points of view described in Chapter II.

Each of us wants to be noticed, to be "seen," and hence feel respected, and validated as existing beings. Respect means recognition. Literally, this can mean "looking back", or simply returning a glance. All human contact is based on this subjective exchange of experience, since none of us can perceive objectively. In this sense, the importance of the phenomenological concept of "co-constitutionality" becomes especially significant, emerging as a recurrent theme from the data in this study.

Ten "major" themes emerged from the data analysis in this study. It is important, however, to reiterate that a phenomenological analysis is never considered complete. Research of this kind can never exhaust an investigated phenomenon because the data always contain more than one investigator can fully explicate. The uncovering of themes and their interplay is an attempt

to capture experience, and is an on-going, dialectical process. In the course of the data analysis, the researcher constantly refers back to the "existentials" that form the basic meaning units of experience, which are, of course, the original thoughts of the co-researchers expressed in their data. The resulting themes often overlap and essences are seen to interconnect across individual perspectives which help to facilitate a holistic understanding of the phenomenon. The themes themselves are of secondary importance to the larger aim of developing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. This goal is attempted and hopefully achieved through the integration and expansion of these themes. One way a researcher can determine whether a theme is important or necessary, is to try to imagine the experience without it. This served as one useful guideline for evaluating the appropriateness of my thematic abstractions.

Relationship of the Present Study to Empirical Research

Although phenomenological research need not be restricted by "fitting in" with the findings of natural science studies, when phenomenological methods are applied to phenomena that have been the the object of natural science investigations, the results should not

appear to "fly in the face" of experimental data. Experimental studies on mutual gaze tend to be supported by the data in this study, particularly the communicative experiments on eye contact discussed in the literature review. For example, experimental research has shown that gaze aversion occurs when individuals seek to avoid high levels of arousal, when they are concealing something or feel guilty about something, or when they have low levels of self-esteem (Garrison & Arensberg, 1976, p.145-146). In addition, so-called Machiavellian personalities tend to use gaze as a means of attaining control, dominance, or power over others (Exline, Thibaut, Hickey, and Gumpert, 1970). Experimental eye contact studies have also shown that the quality and/or amount of mutual gaze that occurs is indicative of the amount of affiliation or attraction present in an interpersonal encounter (Exline & Winters, 1968). These were among several experimental findings that appear to be supported by the data in this study. However, as stated previously, there seemed to be a depth lacking in the experimental approach to the phenomenon that might be more adequately and fully realized by adopting a phenomenological research method.

Practical Implications

Philosophical psychologists have attributed deep significance to the experience of being looked at. R.D. Laing (1960, p.109) has described how some psychotic patients feel as if they become a physical object if stared at - that they might be turned to stone, or "impaled on the glance of another." He noted that in a dangerous world, to be a potentially seeable object, is to feel constantly exposed to unbearably high levels of threat or arousal, the result being that some people seek to make themselves invisible in one way or another. At other times, people have a craving to be seen - to be recognized and confirmed as a person. Eye contact gives them the proof that they <u>are</u> seen. Experiencing mutual gaze as threatening or arousing is a normal human response. In using gaze aversion as an indicator of disturbance, therfore, care must be taken, for it becomes a matter of degree.

Ocular behaviour in psychiatric patients can, however, be of central importance as a visible beacon of psychopathology. This is clearly seen in the severe deficiencies of eye-to-eye contact found in schizophrenics and autistic children (Williams, 1974). Mutual gaze also provides a therapist with an important

channel of affective communication during therapy. Learning to use eye contact effectively provides therapists with invaluable cues and allows them access to the true or authentic inner nature of the person they are seeking to understand. Conversely, if a therapist or counsellor senses that eye contact is too threatening or inhibiting to the client, one could omit direct visual contact by sitting off to one side, or even directly behind, as did Freud in his psychoanalytic sessions. By increasing their awareness of the power of mutual gaze, practitioners in the helping professions could refine their intuitive skills considerably.

Similarly, awareness of eye contact also has practical implications in the pedagogical setting. The data in this study revealed that eye contact can play a powerful role in validating or invalidating the existence or sense of self-esteem in another. The example from the data of a professor directing his visual response to someone other than the questioner is typical of how we can be unaware of the degree to which a phenomenon as subtle as eye contact can serve to enhance (or impede) interpersonal communication. For the sensitive teacher, the flash of recognition or clouds of doubt revealed in most students' eyes as s/he attempts to get a point across, can provide an almost

instantaneous way of measuring one's effectiveness. Training teachers to be alert to body language such as eye contact, could prove to be a valuable and useful intuitive skill.

Knowledge about mutual gazing patterns may also be useful in other fields that require superior interpersonal communication skills, such as politics, law, business management, sales, and labour negotiation. In fact, industrial psychologists are showing an increased interest in studying body language in general, and focus on training others to make use of numerous "tricks" or techniques, such as taking a position of power in a group by deliberately making use of an intimidating stare. An awareness of these techniques can serve to optimize the chances for achieving a desired outcome (Molcho, 1985). It is in this area that an understanding of the "rules" associated with eye contact become important, and in which the theme of using eye contact to gain dominance or control over others becomes apparent.

Further Research

Despite the plethora of experimental research that already exists on the subject of mutual gaze, there seem to be many aspects left to explore that could increase

our understanding of this complex phenomenon. The possibilities for further phenomenological research seem appear to be infinite. Since validity is an ongoing concern in all research, I would suggest the possibility of further studies, in which, for example, two or three different researchers, each using the same empirical descriptive approach I adopted, would perform individual analyses on the data from this study. It would be interesting to see if the process of thematic abstraction and integration would be similar across the researcher group and be consistent with the results I obtained. Or, further studies using different descriptive methods and different data may show whether the patterns of experience of mutual gaze are commonly shared structures that extend beyond the participants used in this study. If the important concerns of minimizing researcher bias and bracketing were adequately addressed, then further studies should yield quite similar results. However, emphasis should again be made that the most important test of validity in this kind of research concerns the extent to which the interpretation of the data resonates with the lived-experience of the participants.

Conclusion

This investigation, inspired by the human science approach to research, used an empirical reflective method to focus on the nature of eye contact and mutual gaze as an object of study. Giving and receiving eye contact is an essential part of our communication with others. It is a phenomenon infused with intentionality and intimacy. One uses it consciously and unconsciously, at times oblivious to its profound impact on others. At other times, one can appear acutely aware of its compelling ability to transmit meaning instantaneously. Mutual gaze seems to have a special significance for us, and is frequently experienced as a kind of intimacy, mutual access, and meeting of minds.

Ten major themes emerged from the data analysis in this study: (1) vision appears to be, as Plato affirmed, pre-eminent amongst the senses; (2) mutual gaze is an information-seeking process characterized by intentionality (3); (4) one can experience mutual gaze as personally validating or invalidating; (5) there are certain unspoken rules associated with eye contact; (6) it serves as a potent courier of affection or dislike; (7) various primordial archetypes and eye images relating to mutual gaze appear to be universal; (8)the

gazing process is a reading process which sometimes results in projecting onto others what we think their gaze may be telling us (9); and (10) Leonardo da Vinci's famous dictum, "The eye is the window to the soul" seems to remain the definitive expression for capturing the heart of the phenomenon.

The object of this analysis has been to reveal more deeply the ineffable and essentially mysterious phenomenon of mutual gaze - something akin to looking deeply at a part of the woven tapestry of human perceptual experience. Subtle, complex, and multi-hued, we can never fully see or comprehend each and every thread contained within.

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Appendix 1

Protocol #1. Female (43)

The first thing that comes to mind is a recent situation where I met a good looking graduate student at a party. His eye contact immediately sent me a loud and clear message. It was very strong - an unmistakable sexual come-on. "I want to get you to bed." Absolutely nothing had been said but there was no mistaking his message and it was so immediate it almost knocked me off my feet!

Also, the other day I noticed a strange thing in one of my classes. Someone else had asked a really good question, and the professor looked straight at me the whole time he was giving his response. I felt unclear why he was focusing on me. The other girl must have felt so humiliated. I felt confused, but it was flattering in this case.

In another situation recently (also in class) I was desperately trying to avoid eye contact with the professor because I didn't want to be chosen as the group discussion leader. If you don't make eye contact, they don't see you. It's like I'm invisible.

- I use it a lot in counselling - It's pretty

powerful. I look straight into people's eyes and keep the focus directed so they don't go off the topic. - Unless I maintain the eye contact as much as possible they feel that there's a lack of interest in what they're saying.

- Teenagers tend not to look you in the eye. Why is this? Sarah always looks away. She will never look directly at me. This is her way of showing anger. She shuts me out. By not looking at me she doesn't have to deal with me and what I'm saying. She's closing off from reality - not dealing with the situation, She's not acknowledging me.

- When I'm angry or don't have control I look away. They get the message. I used it with Bob all the time. - It can be a seductive thing. I maintained eye contact with him and I was geting a sexual come-on in eye contact from him. I made a mental note to myself "He's coming on - be wary."

- In distasteful situations I give no eye contact at all. I avoid making contact by giving no eye contact.

- The first thing I look at is the eyes; they tell more than anything else.

- Sometimes I'm uncomfortable maintaining eye contact. When you maintain eye contact though, it means

you're more comfortable with yourself. It's related to how I feel about myself - if I give more than the other person I feel more in control.

- In a seminar some professors only gave eye contact to one or two students - the rest of us were non-existent as far as I'm concerned. It felt lousy.

- My hairdresser said to me the other day "You look like you've been having an affair - I can see it in your eyes." I guess that's true - you do sparkle through the eyes.

- One professor I've had recently maintains a lot of eye contact with <u>all</u> the students while she's teaching. She's gotten prettier in my mind because of this. She's quite overweight, but I think she's very attractive because of how she is as a person - she's beautiful really.

- When I meet someone, I start with the eyes, work my way down, and then come back to the eyes again.

Appendix 2

Protocol #2. Male (37)

- Recently I was walking to catch a bus. At the busstop my eyes met those of another man's for a brief second. When I looked at him, he'd look away from me. Then I kept seeing he would look furtively away from me whenever I caught his eye. It was like a kind of game. He seemed insecure, as if my looking at him was threatening .

- For me the eyes have it - I guess you'd call it intuitive - I can tell a lot about people, even strangers, by how we look at each other.

- I am told it is easy to make eye contact with me - I like to acknowledge people by making eye contact, by really "seeing" them.

- If I'm feeling external, I use eye contact a lot. If I'm feeling withdrawn or private or sort of internal, I break eye contact quickly, or don't give it in the first place.

- I'm a very visual person - graphic - as an artist I value my sight enormously.

- Often I wonder how it's being read - if it's being misinterpreted. It's such an important channel

for appreciating the world and taking it in. It gives me a sense of wonder, of reverence really.

- Frequently I establish eye contact with the same strangers walking around the campus. When we look at each other, even though I don't know who they are, there's a flash of recognition - as if we do know each other in some way.

- With some people I can hold the gaze longer and it's comfortable. Other times it's very uncomfortable - it's threatening. It depends on how I feel at the time.

I once tried painting my own self-portrait by looking in a mirror. Like van Gogh, you know. It was eerie - a bizarre feeling. Looking closely into your own eyes forces you to ask yourself who you are. It's almost like there's an incongruence between the image on the mirror and who you really are. The mirror image is flat, one-dimensional. It seems you question yourself about who you "think" you are. It's a confrontational experience - I try to find the genuine me.

- When I was a little kid my Dad, when he wanted to make me feel guilty, would make me look in the mirror. "Go take a good look at yourself" he'd say, and I would go into the bathroom, close the door, and laugh, stick out my tongue and make faces at myself.

- I have a relationship now with a friend who I met

in '79. We became very close friends over time, and now it has developed into more than that. I've noticed how her eye contact has changed since we became intimate. It's hard to explain exactly - it's as if there is a certain trust, a deepening of our eye contact. Maybe it's <u>really</u> knowing and understanding the person on all these levels. The deepening of the relationship seems to be reflected in a parallel in the way we look at each other now.

- I'm open; I'm the observer and the observed. She doesn't maintain it as long as I do. Intimacy is not easy for her. She doesn't share herself easily or widely with others. One of the hardest things for her is to reveal herself. She feels she loses some of herself when we become intimate and too close. This shows in eye contact. She needs her solitude. She's unsure. It's like the chain is as strong as it's weakest link.

- The sum total is that it can only go as deep as you're both willing to go with it. You are fully present - no guilt, shame or fear. You're just really with them.

Appendix 3.

Protocol #3. Female (18)

- I never realized how much goes on with eye contact until I started to think about it. I've noticed men and women use it (maybe unconsciously, but I think also deliberately) when they want to impress someone, or are attracted sexually to someone.

- Sometimes I've used it fairly successfully just to challenge and see if I can "score" with another person (usually a guy!) Then I feel a bit guilty after if I "get what I want" because I think maybe I've been devious, - less than honest somehow. (Practicing witchcraft?)

- Other than flirtation etc., I guess I am a fairly "visual contact" kind of person. When I'm introduced to someone, I'm so busy looking into their faces (especially eyes) that their name usually escapes me totally. I have to make a great effort to listen and not just "look".

- When I'm walking down the street, feeling sexy or attractive that day, I'm pleased when I get eye contact from others. If, however, I'm feeling "ugly", I think "Oh no - that person thinks I'm ugly too" - or just a

glance from someone can tell me what they think of me. Is that similiar to being paranoid?

- There is nothing greater than really making close eye contact with someone you are involved with. - It's like we are one. We totally understand each other. - When I'm embarrassed I have to look away - then the other person won't notice how unsure I feel. I don't like people who can't "look me in the eye." The're usually chicken about their real feelings and can't be up-front. It drives me crazy!

- The other day my Social Studies teacher said "hi" to me in the hall and she <u>really</u> looked at me and smiled. Our eyes met just for a second, but it made me feel so great for the whole morning.

- Sometimes people act like snobs - even strangers that pass you on the street. They give you no eye contact at all and it's as if I must be invisible to them. This doesn's make me feel good - It's like I'm not worth their noticing me and that I don't exist.

- When I was a bit younger (like 12 or 13) I didn't like being noticed and didn't like strangers looking at me . Now I kind of like it.

- I can tell when my parents are mad at each other - They give each other "these looks" and think that no one else can tell that they're mad, but I can easily

tell.

- My Dad always gives us kids the evil eye when he's mad at us. Or I can tell he loves me or feels proud of me just by the way he looks at me sometimes.

- Once I tried staring at this guy I sort of liked more than I probably should - It freaked him out - it was weird.

Appendix 4

Protocol #4. Male (42)

Some Thoughts about Eye Contact:

Whenever I look at a friend I am usually reminded that I cannot look at the person straight in the eyes and that I am seeing only a portion of the view. I think I was ten years old when I was told that our eyes focus on a point. Look as closely as you can into anothers' face and you will find yourself looking at one eye or the other or even some place else but you will never be able to look into both eyes at once. But as a child I was always told to look my parents straight in the eyes in order for them to discern if I were telling them the truth.

Which eye should be looked at most? The nearest one? The left eye if the person being looked at is left handed? Should equal time be given looking at each eye during the course of a conversation? A portrait artist may scan your face during conversation. The experience can be disarming if unprepared for rapidly wandering eyes - glances which bear no relationship to the drift of conversation. Most face to face encounters I have with friends are, alas, little more than snap shot

encounters. I recognize my friend and am in turn recognized. We exchange ideas. Subtle changes are disregarded unless significant to our converstation. How often do I leave a meeting with a friend - even a lengthy one with the feeling of not having seen enought of the person?

Whenever I look at a stranger it is to see only enough clues for dealing with the context in which we meet. Are the others' eyes friendly? Threatening? Bored? Is there a conflict between the expression in the eyes and the mouth? Do the eyes betray a smile which is false? In business relationships my eye contact is not always used to the best of my advantage, especially with skilled negotiators. The departure from looking at the business adversary with a constant gaze too often signals a lack of preparation, being caught off guard by an unexpected question.

Like most people I have developed skills with my eyes by trial and error. How do you pass a stranger on a dark street in a questionable neighbourhood? Hold your gaze on the eye furthest away until the tension of approaching builds. Shift to the nearest eye. Is the other still watching? Shift back to the far eye as you pass. Has the stranger been caught off guard into

believing your shifting eyes are glancing away? Is the stranger still watching? Why? Most people glance away from each other as they pass, in a city. In a small town nods and smiles accompany an exchange of glances.

Looking into animal eyes arouses sensations from our primitive past. The ocelot recently captured stares out from its cage with all the wild fury that inspired Blake's "Tiger, Tiger". The leopard pacing in its narrow cell as it has for years stares blankly with the neurotic eye of the defeat. The household cat stares briefly then shifts its gaze. What animal can outstare the human?

Have I seen cat-like eyes in my angry child? What I regret most about the human eye is that it is so much of a one-way street. Unlike the sense of touch which is a two-way form of commmunication, sight depends so much upon the beholder. The twinkly eye, the sad glance, the furtive look are meaningless if the viewer chooses not to see. How often have I missed a message because a subtle signal from another's eyes was not perceived in time?

Looking back over the years I recall encounters when the exchange of looks seemed more important than any other thing which happened, but they are few in number. The fixed military gaze of the army commanders.

Initial encounters with the R.C.M.P. or British Bobbies or Customs Officials - the direct look into the eyes signals a peaceful and rational encounter. Yet Royalty can be disarmed (momentarily) by such a look since dropped eyes are to be expected.

Memories:

Royalty - I looked straight into the Queen's Eyes and she looked momentarily shocked. She had been expecting to see mine lowered. I studied her face as we spoke. My voice faltered but my eyes were fixed on her features.

Handicapped - Twinkling eyes improved the exchange.

Wedding - My wife's eyes filled with tears at our rehearsal. The minister's unmoved glances (almost cynical).

Children (Birth) - Maya's searching eyes for her mother, as she was crying out briefly in pain.

Parents - tired eyes, unseeing eyes, viewing their adult children as still children.

Brother, Cousins - Friendly, recognition of a close bond.

Old Friends - Something to treasure from the past, exchange of glances which trigger the mind's eye.

Mirror Analysis - Who am I? I see my reflection and my own eyes.

Strangers - Reading their personalities in their eyes.

I feel embarrassed writing about these memories. I wonder if I have been assessing my use of eye contact correctly? Am I giving away too much?

Curved Eyes - Wooden Eyes - Totems.

- Stone Eyes - Statues (Greek)
- Plastic eyes
- Glass eyes

Admonishing eyes - lowered eyes (guilt, defeat, submission)

The Editing Eyes

Aged Eyes - Old Doctor Kearney's eyes

Eye to Eye / I to I / I to Eye / Eye to I /

The T.V. Eyes. Barbara Fromm

In the shower - thinking about:

Probing the T.V. telecaster's stare

Yesterday I worked for several hours with a colleague designing a piece of electronic equipment. We spoke almost continuously exchanging ideas about how to arrange and fit components. Although we were constantly exchanging ideas, we exchanged mutual stares less than four times. We looked at each other in the eyes when we met; once when we were debating a point and when we said goodbye. If there were other things I do not recall them.

Is there a technical term for that event when two people look each other directly in the eye? Recognition hinges on this event. Something special happens around such behaviour. I think I know what is happening between two people if they are looking directly at each other. There seems to be a signal of increased awareness or communication. This is certainly true if they are in love or having an angry exchange. Empathy is easier.

These days the most rewarding event is to look at my infant son. He will look back at me for the longest time with the most exhuberant smile. Here is communication through the eyes; beyond words.

One of the problems with eye contact is that it distracts so completely from other things. The initial contact is often as arresting as a sneeze.

At the end of a healing ceremony on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota the singing stopped, the medecine man asked for the lanterns to be lit. I had made the mistake of insisting on sitting in front of the door. As the lights came up I found myself looking directly into the Old Sioux's eyes. He rocked his head back. My host informed me later that I had complicated the ceremony. The little lights which had twinkled in the darkness - the "spirits" were expected to flow in

through the door. Instead they had come down from the ceiling of the old log cabin and had to exit the same way. The last time I saw that medecine man was in a cafe, off the reserve. He nodded and smiled with a fixed stare.

My anatomy teacher taught me how to see. One should use one's eyes to discover form. How much of a structure of a person do I see when I look into their eyes?

Once when I returned to my small home town (where everyone knows everyone else) after having been away for years, I experienced a sensation of being invisible. My physical appearance had changed somewhat. I had long hair and a beard. I walked along the main street looking at so many familiar faces, seeing my old high school friends. I stared at them straight in the eyes. Unseeing eyes briefly looked back then passed on. I know so much about each person I passed. The experience was as though I was not there. Are the dead aware of such things? I believed I had become invisible. I also had a tremendous sensation of power.

Appendix 5

Protocol #5. Female (42)

Eye Contact - or lack of it.

Observation in restaurant: Subject conversing about an observation he made during the day. While speaking he did not look at me - only brief glances - his eyes moved to different points - looking over my shoulder - over my head - moved to other people - looked down.

My reaction - I found that it was difficult to pay attention to what he was saying. Although he was speaking to me - I did not feel that he was attending to me - it seemed he was more interested in something going on behind me. Or possibly, on some level, he was afraid of my disapproval. The conversation sort of petered out, without further comment.

Eye contact - or lack of it.

I have noticed difficulty in conversing with someone who does not look at me when I am speaking. If he does not respond, as well as not looking at me - I am given the impression that he has not heard. Thus I repeat what was said (or the question) which often receives an angry response - that he has not heard.

If they (he) has not looked at me when I am speaking, I feel invalidated, rejected, unimportant,

unacknowledged - which may be the intention of the person I spoke to. Net result - I stop speaking - or dwindle down and/or leave - as I am left with the definite impression that the other person is not interested in what I have to say (my husband, my son).

Often this may reflect fatigue on the part of the other person, or that he would prefer to be left alone to watch his game without interruption - however it happens so often - that the net result is that I leave the room - or do not go to sit with him at all - which does indeed leave him alone.

Ends up being quite serious - when you've made the effort & he doesn't want to acknowledge you, it becomes a major problem.

Eye contact between friends. Lunch with a supportive woman.

In this case eye contact during conversation is frequently sustained and in conjunction with appropriate facial expression - conveys the sense of being heard and understood - of being cared for.

In this type of give and take conversation, the listener tends to maintain more constant eye contact, & watches the speaker, searching facial expression and gestures. The speaker's eyes move around more - returning frequently to check the listener's expression

and response. The eyes of the speaker tend to shift rapidly - sometimes looking down or up to the side - not looking at anything in particular which may indicate an inner search or reflection as they speak - then the eyes return to the listener to check the response.

This type of conversation is mutual - it is a sharing of experience - a sharing of information and emotion - which is highly valued by both parties.

Another type of eye contact which I do not like is the cold, hard stare of intimidation, which can vary in length, but is terminated only when the other party looks away (backs down). This look conveys a sense of threat and is meant to silence the other person - and establish dominance. It is usually accompanied by silence (may have been preceded by angry words) and threatening body posture. The intimidating person is usually drawn to full height and looking down at the other person.

In competitive sports men often intentionally use this stare and posture to intimidate and warn their opponents. It's all part of the game.

In a family context such intimidation may be more damaging. It endgenders anger, frustration, humiliation, sometimes defiance in the receiver. In this family defiance is always punished.

W. responding to her data upon re-reading:
Distancing - in writing I have to make a concerted effort to own what I am saying. That's fairly typical of me - I wouldn't intentionally shut people out by not giving eye contact - I don't use it in the negative sense, as H. does.

I wrote this as a receiver rather than how I would use eye contact.

It can be damaging in terms of male-female relationships. Our whole culture encourages men to develop that skill - i.e., to use it for intimidation, dominance in athletics and business. Women are taught to avert that at all costs. It's extremely hostile, for a woman to give man a look like that - it could be physically dangerous because it's so hostile and intimidating.

I don't think women use eye contact in that way - we are taught to look away or back down.